

PRINCIPLES OF  
CHRISTIAN LIVING

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# PRINCIPLES OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

GERALD BIRNEY SMITH

*Revised by*  
LELAND FOSTER WOOD



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## FOREWORD

**I**N THE original Preface, Gerald Birney Smith wrote as follows: "Two factors of great importance for ethics have entered into the practical thinking of men today. These are the growing familiarity with experimental methods of studying human behavior and the growing prevalence of the historical method of interpreting Christianity. Until recently, treatises on ethics have usually been based on philosophical theories. Modern ethical inquiries are making increasing use of empirical surveys. Students are thus being trained to determine questions of right and wrong by analyzing the situation before them and attempting to trace the consequences of any proposed action.

"The present volume is intended to help students apply in the realm of Christian conduct the same method which is becoming current in our social life today. Christianity is a historical religion and has been constantly developing in relation to the economic, political, and other social movements of the Western world. Christian ethics has always been concerned with adjustment to actual conditions. In our day maladjustments are peculiarly acute. The discussion in the following pages is intended to exhibit Christianity as a historically developing movement, and to indicate some of the chief questions arising today which chal-

## FOREWORD

lenge Christian idealism. It is hoped that suggestions may have been made which will enable Christian students to correlate their religious ideals with the moral tasks disclosed by scientific analysis in such fashion as to make modern Christianity at the same time an out-growth of the past and a development into the future."

The author of the revision was a student in Gerald Birney Smith's classes when the book was in course of preparation. Its approach, which takes full account of the past and yet achieves a forward-looking point of view, applies with peculiar appropriateness to the present time when backward-looking systems have broken down and a somber view of man and of society has spread over the earth. As we see how man has moved from one point to another, conserving much from his gains and making solid new advances from time to time, we may believe that the good in man is stronger than it seems on the surface and that evil is weaker than at first appears.

Christian living is living with faith, with endurance, and with zest. It arouses an enthusiasm for better days, for whose coming we must prepare. Christian living is a working-out of the spirit which Jesus exemplified. It is the experiencing of fellowship with him and the releasing of spiritual resources suited to the needs of today.

LELAND FOSTER WOOD

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PLACE OF ETHICS IN HUMAN LIFE

ONE of our chief aims is to incorporate "good" things into our scheme of living and to eliminate "bad" things. We are at great pains to secure "good" food, "good" clothes, "good" houses in which to live, "good" positions in which to work, "good" schools, "good" government, and the like. Probably very few people, if challenged to define just what is meant by goodness in each case, would be able to give a clear statement other than a confession of personal satisfaction. But no one would doubt the desirability of promoting the good, even if it were not entirely clear what this involved. This fundamental fact of human preferences and satisfactions antedates theorizing concerning the nature of the good. All systems of ethics must in the last analysis be tested by their capacity to enlighten men as to the things which will bring lasting satisfaction.

THE CONCEPTION OF THE "HIGHEST GOOD."— Everyone wants what is good; but men are often mistaken in their judgments as to what is really good. The thing which makes an immediate appeal to the senses is likely to *seem* for the time being supremely desirable. But we frequently learn to our regret that impulsive indulgence brings evils in its train. Every act has to be judged, not only in the light of its immediate appeal,

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but also in the light of its consequences. In the quest for the good, therefore, we are inevitably led to make comparisons. We balance present satisfaction against ultimate consequences; we try to estimate the relative values of competing opportunities; we compare personal preferences with what others think and say; and on the basis of such reflection we attempt to decide which is the "highest good." When the entire scope of human life has been covered in such a way as to give to various possibilities their appropriate valuation, we have a philosophy of the good to which we may refer for guidance. Such a philosophy is ethics.

Because our experience of the good life depends so largely on our relations with people, it is evident that whatever else the highest good might mean it would include as one of its central elements a set of right relations with other persons, which relations would stimulate us to our best, would supplement our experience by the experience of others, and would facilitate our growth into full stature as personalities. Since personality is the most significant thing we know, the highest values would come to us largely in terms of personal interaction and fellowship. This means that good persons embody the highest good.

A good person is one who lives in right relationships. Conceptions of goodness have often been of a vague or sentimental character. Personal goodness inheres in part in devotion to some well-chosen part of the world's work, including preparation for it and doing it as well as it can be done. If goodness is to have vital meaning, the conception of a good man must be resolvable into

elements which pertain to the functions and relationships of the man; so that to say "He is a good husband, a good father, a good dentist (if that is his work), a good friend, a good neighbor, a man who takes seriously his relationships with God and man, a person who is trying to raise the common level and who has a wholesome influence"—all this is to say convincingly "He is a good man." A community in which people are living in this way is certain to contribute to the sum total of good in the world.

**MORAL OBLIGATION.**—In the case of a conflict between desirable things we attempt to determine the good which we shall "always" be glad that we selected. *Moral* good is something which we feel obligated to seek even when our momentary impulses pull us in a contrary direction. Moral behavior is thus often in defiance of what seems at the time to be the "natural" way in which to act. It means the constant quest of the highest good. A moral judgment aims to declare what should be approved in view of the very nature of the situation as it affects the welfare of individuals, the further development of character, and the good of society.

**THE GOOD OF OTHERS.**—One important source of satisfaction is the good opinion of others. Our conduct must have regard to the welfare of others as well as to our personal preferences. Inasmuch as it is natural for us to think of the world in which we live in terms of our own personal valuations, we usually have to be trained to consider the rights and the privileges of others where these do not coincide with our own inter-

ests. At the same time, it should not be supposed that the individual with his own circle of goods stands inevitably opposed to the good of others. The entire education of the individual consists in learning to share with humanity the good things of life. It is really as natural to be thoughtful of others as it is to be solicitous for one's own happiness. Often the two interests coincide. But when they do not, the welfare of others must be considered as well as one's personal preference.

**THE AUTHORITY OF CONVENTIONALLY ACCEPTED CODES.**—If the task of discovering and comparing values had to be undertaken *de novo* by each individual or by each generation, it would be appalling in its complexity and immensity. But mankind has always been engaged in this task. During countless generations men have been learning and formulating the fundamental principles which must guide one in the quest for the highest good. These principles come to be formulated in the maxims and precepts which parents teach to their children and which social opinion maintains in the processes of education. Every child is born into a society where right and wrong are already defined. He is taught to respect what the social group regards as right. He is punished if he transgresses. So complete is this control that the child normally thinks of moral laws as definite, inevitable rules belonging to the very structure of the world. Each generation is thus enabled to start with the accumulated experience of the race.

**THE LIMITATIONS OF FORMAL ETHICAL SYSTEMS.**—When moral ideals are definitely expressed in a par-

ticular code, they tend to remain static. The original reason for approving a way of behavior may be entirely forgotten in the course of a few generations, and the code may be set up as a moral end in itself. If the moral precepts remain unchanged while the conditions of life change, the time may come when the code no longer represents the highest good under the changed circumstances.

NECESSITY OF REVISION OF ETHICAL IDEAS.—There is also a complementary principle operating in reference to ethical codes. When moral rules as formulated do not work well in particular cases, thoughtful people try to refine their moral measuring tools so that they will indicate the rights and the wrongs of conduct more accurately. The natural tendency of mankind to refine its tools and to revise its judgments is operative in the field of ethics as elsewhere.

To continue to impose an antiquated code on each new generation, under changed circumstances, may mean the defeat of morality. Customs like the blood-feuds which caused such pitiable distress in certain backward communities have continued in defiance of finer sentiments just because each new generation is taught to reverence the folkways of the group, and adverse criticism of these habits is considered wrong. The correction of imperfect or perverted moral customs is often very difficult whenever strong sentiment reinforces a traditional code. This was true even of cannibalism, head-hunting, human sacrifices, and such other practices in savage communities. Still later it was true of dueling and slavery. Now we are experiencing

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the same difficulty with reference to war, economic exploitation, and racial discrimination.

**MORAL LIVING AS A CREATIVE TASK.**—There is no short and easy way of discovering the content of morality. While we may be grateful for the large number of positive principles which have been tested in the history of the race, we must also recognize that the relationships of men with their environment and with one another are so complex that the morally earnest man can never excuse himself from further critical inquiry as to the highest good. The example of Jesus should be taken to heart by every Christian in this respect. He was constantly criticizing the shortcomings of those who fancied that they had already attained perfection. He always brought into the foreground the spiritual welfare of the particular persons with whom he was dealing, insisting that formal rules and principles must either serve humanity or be modified. Even the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. A regard for the spirit of Jesus will lead us to formulate the principles of morality in such a way that the earnest quest for the highest good may never be abated.

The ethical life is one of inquiry as well as one of obedience to formal principles. Ethical living requires added information on many issues which have been with us for a long time, and accurate analysis of new issues that are arising. Humanity in the past has worked out many principles and maxims applying to the life of the individual, but the interpretation of the highest good as applied to family life or to social rela-

tions as a whole has constituted in the main an area of neglect.

How RELIGION REINFORCES ETHICS.—Strictly speaking, theoretical ethics is concerned solely with the discovery and the realization of the highest good in human life. It is assumed that, when the good is actually known, its very goodness leads men to seek it. But in practical life men are swayed far less by carefully reasoned-out conclusions than they are by sentiment and loyalty. Consequently, we find that the common sense of the race has expressed moral ideals for the most part in the form of emotion-producing attitudes or programs. Such ideals as justice, honor, purity, patriotism, generosity, evoke sentiments of devotion. We feel that the man who devotes himself sincerely to these ideals has an outstanding spiritual quality. Almost inevitably profound moral convictions take on a religious interpretation.

Religion is a concern for right relations with the cosmic power on which we are dependent. It means the desire to be right with God. It is true that sometimes a conception of God is so devoid of morality that men seek their salvation by rites and ceremonies which have little or nothing to do with morals. But religious thought at its best affirms that God cares supremely for moral conduct. When, as is the case in Christianity, God is defined as loving and holy, religion must inevitably stress love and holiness in man as the most important things. Thus in Christianity, religious experience furnishes spiritual power for right living.

THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF ETHICS.—Christian

ethics, like any system of ethics, seeks to define the highest good and to indicate how man may attain it. But the clue to the understanding of this is found in a vital relationship with Jesus, whereby the Christian is enabled with more or less success to possess and to exhibit the spirit of Jesus in his behavior. It is true that the place of Jesus in the Christian's life is often represented in formal ways and that the authority of Christ is sometimes claimed for pretensions of ecclesiasticism which are open to moral criticism. But the true Christian is one who finds in his experience that Jesus brings so illuminating and uplifting an insight into the values of life that he turns constantly to Jesus for aid in his endeavors to determine what he ought to do. Christian ethics, of course, agrees with other types of ethics in most of its affirmations. But it insists on making supreme the test of Christlikeness, because the constant experience of relationship with Jesus brings the deepening conviction that in the Christlike spirit we have the best possible equipment for making our ethical inquiries with a due regard to all human values and the surest means of commanding that emotion of loyalty which gives carrying-power to moral action.

**THE NECESSITY FOR A HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF ETHICS.**—When inadequate conceptions of what is right have been glorified by sentiments of loyalty, a very serious moral problem results. On the one hand, growing knowledge calls for an abandonment or an alteration of certain practices; on the other hand, loyalty to the beliefs of parents and trusted friends seems to call for steadfastness in the customary practices. What

must it have cost a high-minded man to refuse to accept a challenge to fight a duel in the days when "honor" was supposed to require this way of settling disputes!

The historical understanding of morality furnishes a way of improving moral ideals without a serious wrench to loyalty. If it is once seen that the moral code of any age is the outgrowth of the social experience of that age, it immediately becomes clear that an enlarging experience will demand expression in a better code. It will be found that the sentiment of loyalty to the highest good can be carried over constructively into the requirements of a changed situation without that seeming denial of sacred things which occurs when the traditional code is uncritically disparaged.

It is important for Christians to know that ethical ideals have been developing not only during biblical times but also throughout Christian history. During most of that period the changes were so slow that the moral code of one generation usually sufficed for the needs of the next. But in our day there have been profound disruptions of earlier patterns of living. Owing to the cataclysmic alteration of conditions—social, industrial, and political—and to the appalling conflicts of cultures and ideologies, we have conflict and turmoil in the realm of ethics. Consequently, it is characteristic of the youth of today that the moral ideas of past generations are in some cases felt to be too cramping and are often regarded as inadequate to guide a creative and forward-looking type of life. This results in a moral tension which is the perplexity and the

despair of many a parent. The necessity of acquiring a historical understanding of the relationship between moral ideals and the actual conditions of life is apparent today as perhaps never before in history. Only with such knowledge can we hope to work our way into an understanding of new duties without a disastrous breach with the loyalties of the past.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Make a list of the things which you judge "good" or "bad" in the course of an ordinary day's experience, e.g., your breakfast, the weather, your clothes, your teacher or employer, your job, your companions. In how many cases can you tell just *why* you judge as you do?
2. Give instances of conflicts between goods in your own life. How do you decide which to select? How does the study of ethics help us to get the most out of life?
3. How many of your moral convictions are the result of your own critical thinking? How is the moral experience of the past made available for us? Perhaps the most important duty inculcated in children is obedience. Why is obedience so stressed? Is obedience so prominent a duty in older people? How do you account for the difference?
4. Is it morally desirable that each generation should follow exactly the moral precepts of a preceding generation? Discuss the family feuds in the Kentucky mountains in the light of the foregoing question.
5. Do you *feel* more intensely the importance of a religiously defined duty than of a duty not so defined? E.g., which seems more important, to go to church or to go to an uplifting lecture? Is perjury any worse than lying? Why is it more severely punished? Is a "sacred cause" morally different from any other good cause? If so, wherein does the difference lie?

6. Why is it necessary to know the history of ethical ideals? Does history reveal an unchanging code of ethics? Are there any precepts in the Bible which have been left behind in the course of Christian history? How does a knowledge of the history of ethics help us to an intelligent valuation of our own duties?

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## CHAPTER II

### SOME ASPECTS OF HEBREW ETHICS

**C**HRISTIAN ideals did not appear suddenly without any relation to previous history. Jesus was a Jew, and his first disciples were trained as Jews. Their loyalties, their conceptions of right and wrong, their attitude toward their fellow-men, their ideal of the highest good, and their hope for the future were all shaped by their experience in the Jewish community. Some aspects of that Jewish inheritance have continued to dominate Christian thinking down to our own day.

**THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF HEBREW MORALS.**—The national life of the Hebrews was characterized by the vivid belief that their welfare depended on the active co-operation of their God. Only as armies were empowered by Yahweh could they conquer. Only as the wisdom of Yahweh should guide rulers and judges could they rightly organize and control social life. But Yahweh would make his contribution only if he deemed his people worthy to receive it. It was supremely important, therefore, to know the requirements of Yahweh. Ethics consisted in doing the will of God. Morality, when thus viewed, is a high and solemn religious dedication.

**THE THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION OF ETHICS.**—Such a theological attitude as that above described

may furnish thoroughly wholesome and inspiring moral guidance if theology is kept in close touch with the actual experiences of men. But if, for any reason, theology becomes stereotyped and formal, attention may be diverted from real moral issues. The great prophets, for example, found men more concerned with matters of correct ritual than with the actual social conditions in the cities. Jesus was compelled to rebuke religious men because they cared more for theologically defined customs than for the spiritual welfare of men and women around them. The theological interpretation of ethics is magnificent when the will of God is discovered in real moral tasks. It may defeat the best morality if custom and tradition usurp the first place.

**THE MORAL MESSAGE OF THE GREAT PROPHETS.**—The great prophets were characterized by a moral passion which swept past stereotyped codes proclaiming a message of justice and mercy. The prophets sharply denounced the supposition that God cares more for correct ritual than he does for moral conduct. They declared that the things well pleasing to God are precisely those human values which it is the business of ethics to interpret. The messages of the prophets are like nothing else in all literature. They are flaming with religious zeal; but that zeal is through and through ethical. In the prophetic books of the Old Testament we have the theological interpretation of morals at its best.

**THE SOCIAL SETTING OF THE ETHICS OF LATER JUDAISM.**—The destruction of the national life of the Hebrews brought important consequences in the develop-

ment of ethical thinking. It was assumed that disaster was God's way of punishing men for not having done his will. But the destruction of the nation, culminating in the looting and the wrecking of the temple itself, was a disaster almost too terrible to contemplate. Its occurrence could have only one meaning. God must be inconceivably offended by the conduct of his people; so much so that he had abandoned the temple and departed from the land of Judea. How under these circumstances could God be reconciled? The sins which had been committed against him must have been more grievous than had been supposed. If ever God were to return and to be favorable to the land, a stricter code of morals than had hitherto prevailed must be put into practice.

**LEGALISM AS AN OUTGROWTH OF THIS MORAL EARNESTNESS.**—In the endeavor to discover the things which would please Yahweh, the story of Israel's past was studied in order to learn from the glorious days of old. The rituals and practices which had been hallowed in history were brought again to mind. In addition, devout souls elaborated forms of worship and ceremonies of propitiation believed to be pleasing to God. The supremely ethical emphasis of the prophets was not lost; but it was merged in a larger total of precepts, partly ethical and partly ritualistic. In the time of Jesus we find the Pharisees more alert to certain minutiae of Sabbath-keeping than to the uncharted and unpredictable needs of humanity on the Sabbath. It is important for us to understand this type of legalism; for it has persisted in Christian ethics and has

puzzled men by its strange combination of deep moral earnestness with a lack of ethical perspective.

**THE NOBLE ASPECTS OF LEGALISM.**—Legalism represents a thoroughly religious way of conceiving the moral life. It is believed that God has revealed his will in precise fashion. Duty therefore is clear. The moral man will dedicate himself to the Divine Will. Conscientiousness is developed in remarkably definite ways. Right and wrong are sharply distinguished. Right is what God has commanded. Wrong is what God has forbidden. Inasmuch as it is believed that the will of God is revealed in the sacred Scriptures, the legalist regularly and diligently studies those Scriptures. He thus constantly nourishes his thinking on the noble ideals there set forth. He learns to love the law of God. There is an admirable staunchness and a certainty about his moral convictions. He is conscious of living in relation to God and is striving to meet God's approval. All other considerations are secondary to this aim. We can all recall legalists whose character has won our complete admiration. Something of the whole-souled consecration of the legalist is essential to the highest morality.

**SOME DEFECTS OF LEGALISM.**—The primary defect of legalism is that it is concerned with a collection of precepts rather than with the actual exigencies of life itself. It is true that the Scriptures which the legalist uses grew out of life; they embody pertinent and wholesome directions for moral behavior. But the study of a book can never take the place of a study of life itself. When, as is the case with the Bible, the pre-

cepts come from a distant past, the student is likely to be confronted with commandments, some of which have little application to the present. The second of the Ten Commandments, for example, belongs to a day when idolatry was prevalent. Only by analogy and by somewhat far-fetched interpretation can it be made to yield guidance for us today. The scribes in the time of Jesus were more concerned with the analysis of written precepts than with the sympathetic understanding of the needs of people around them. They could tithe mint, anise, and cummin and forget the weightier matters of the law. The legalist is likely to cling tenaciously to formal requirements without asking seriously whether these do or do not best serve human interests.

Again, if the guidance of conduct is to be derived exclusively from Scripture, it is imperative that that Scripture be rightly interpreted. Official interpreters inevitably arise—the scribes of later Judaism, the doctors of the Catholic church in medieval times, the theologians in Protestantism. These interpreters almost inevitably are scholars with a taste for literary study. They become interested in technical problems connected with the understanding of the literature which they study. The interpretations which they pass on to the common people are likely to be strongly institutional and theological. The ethics thus expounded tends to become academic. Sometimes, as apparently was the case in Jesus' day, an aristocratic distinction is made between the experts and the "people who know not the law." Legalism runs the risk of becoming de-

humanized. The magnificent religious devotion engendered by legalism thus may estrange its devotees from the broader and less formal aspects of human life. The morals of "orthodox" Jews in the civilization of the twentieth century might well be studied as an instance of the outcome of legalism.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ESCHATOLOGICAL HOPE.— The prophets of Israel kept the faith of their people alive by the assurance that sometime Yahweh would intervene to rescue his people from their misery. But as time went on, it became more and more evident that such a rescue would involve a radical alteration of the forces in control of the destinies of the Hebrew people. Only by some miracle of power could the glory of Israel be re-established.

In so far as thinking was influenced by these apocalyptic visions, certain emphases appeared which had a bearing on ethics. In the first place, the present course of events was depreciated in contrast to the glorious future. The "present evil age" must be brought to an end by the invasion of heavenly forces. This meant a revolutionary rather than an evolutionary conception of the way in which to attain the highest good. It rendered impossible a positive valuation of existing social institutions. The ethics of the Kingdom were set largely in contrast to the customs of men in the present order. It might have been considered, however, that even divine intervention could be of benefit to men only as they were morally prepared to profit by the opportunities and conditions divinely offered.

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**THE CONCEPTION OF REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.**—Since the existing social order was thought of as something which must be destroyed before the consummation of the Kingdom was possible, there was a hiatus between present achievement and ultimate reward. The law of Yahweh was to be kept, in order to please Yahweh, who in his own way and in his own good time would reward the faithful by admitting them to a share in the Kingdom. There is always the danger of artificiality in the conception of a reward. The thing which is done in order to secure the reward need not have any inherent causal relationship to the reward itself. At its worst it degenerates into a sort of commercial transaction. One "claims God's promise" on presentation of a minimum of good works.

But the conception of divine reward has also its uplifting side. Instead of seeking always to make sure of his own happiness, the moral man is to do what is right, regardless of personal consequences, trusting to God to reward him in the right way and at the proper time. Thus morals are prevented from degenerating into a mere seeking of utilitarian benefits. This conception of divine reward was effectively used by Jesus to inculcate attitudes which would inevitably involve self-denial and sacrifice. But Jesus so defined man's duty as to avoid any exaltation of formalism.

**THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE FROM JUDAISM.**—Christians can never be too grateful for the Hebrew Scriptures. In them we have a sublime interpretation of the good life in terms of a religious devotion which is at the same time moral. The Hebrew prophets will always

challenge and rebuke formal and inhuman conceptions of religion. The Psalms and the Wisdom literature will always reveal the dignity of a life which is seeking God's approval. The content of the Hebrew ideal is an inspiration to all ages.

But, largely because the Hebrew Scriptures have been interpreted by scribes and theologians rather than by historians, the legalism of later Judaism has been perpetuated in Christianity, in spite of the opposition of great Christian leaders. It still finds a large place in Christianity as well as in modern Judaism. It does, indeed, preserve the sturdy conscientiousness which is so exalted by the prophets and thus helps to tone up the moral energy of Christianity. But it also today, as in the time of Jesus, binds heavy burdens of ritual, of formal observance, of stereotyped theological ideas, upon men's shoulders. It creates unnecessary distinctions between strict formalists and those who use more direct and informal ways of determining moral conduct. One aspect of Christian ethics in all ages is the task of winning freedom from the legalistic method, while conserving the noble spirit of consecration which it embodies.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What advantage is there in identifying morality with the will of God? Do those who thus define morality seem to you to be more admirable in character than those who define morality without reference to God?
2. Does the purpose to do the will of God necessarily lead to good judgment as to what is right? A New England farmer chopped off his right hand because it had been instrumental in wrong-

doing. He believed he was obeying God (see Matt. 5:30). How would you judge his action?

3. How did the great prophets criticize the religion of their people? What did they put first in religion? Why do we value the prophets so highly today?
4. What is "legalism"? How does the legalist ascertain the will of God? How did the scribes in Judaism determine moral questions? Did their method of studying the Scriptures lead to a wholesome moral life? Why does a conscientious Jew refuse to eat pork? Are his reasons good ones?
5. What moral defect is there in doing a good deed for the sake of a reward? Ought virtue to be its own reward?
6. In what respects have Jewish ideals entered into Christian ethics?

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## CHAPTER III

### THE ETHICAL IDEAL OF JESUS

THE Christian confesses himself to be a disciple of Jesus. To him the highest good is embodied in a personality supremely worthy of being a standard. Thus it is of very great practical importance that we should rightly understand the teachings and the ideals of Jesus. Many modern treatises on Christian ethics are simply attempts to portray the teachings of Jesus in systematic form as a guide to right living.

SOME DIFFICULTIES TO BE FACED.—It is not easy to determine precisely what Jesus taught. There are two considerations which the interpreter of the New Testament must face.

1. The differing denominations of Christendom all appeal to Jesus as authority for their beliefs. High churchmen believe that Jesus established a fully organized church and committed its guidance to an apostolic priesthood. Democratic Christian bodies believe that Jesus gave to all his followers equal access to sources of genuine spiritual authority. Advocates of war and advocates of peace both quote Jesus. Fundamentalists and modernists both claim to be truthfully interpreting the gospel. Every Christian reads the teachings of Jesus with the feeling that Jesus will, of course, sanction what the reader believes. It is possible to find detached

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sayings to support almost any doctrine. Our current prejudices make it very difficult for us to go back nineteen centuries and discover what ideals really lay in the mind of Jesus.

2. Critical historical study calls attention to some matters which cannot be overlooked. The Gospels were written a generation or more after the death of Jesus. Obviously, they contain only a small fraction of his total sayings. The different Gospels do not always give the same version of a saying. They do not always put it in the same setting or give it the same meaning. It is becoming more and more clear to students of the Gospels that the writers were more concerned to persuade their readers of the Lordship of Jesus than to engage in minute and critically careful historical narrative. The sayings which are recorded are those which had come to be familiar in the early communities because they seemed to have some special message for Christians in the first century. Strictly speaking, they represent edifying exposition of a few selected saying of Jesus for the benefit of Christians who faced problems and situations frequently very different from those which modern Christians face. The Gospels cannot be treated as if they were shorthand reports of actual conversations. We cannot ignore the possibility that the evangelists, in their desire to be helpful, gave interpretations of some of the sayings of Jesus which differed from the original intent. For example, a comparison of Matthew's Beatitudes with those reported by Luke shows important differences. Which represent the actual teaching of Jesus?

## THE HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE GOSPELS.

—The Gospel writers were primarily concerned to strengthen the faith of those for whom they were writing. Just as a good sermon addresses itself to the actual spiritual needs of the people to whom it is preached, so the Gospels were adapted to the religious problems of the time in which they were written. This fact is both a liability and an asset. It means that some things which are of primary concern to us moderns are not mentioned in the recorded teachings of Jesus, just because these modern questions did not exist when the Gospels were written. On the other hand, some of the questions discussed in detail have to do with ritualistic practices or with conceptions long since obsolete in Christianity. It is only by analogy that we may apply such teachings to our present-day problems. We are thus driven by the historical study of the Gospels to seek the spirit and intention of the teachings there recorded instead of being content with a mere tabulation of precepts.

JESUS' METHOD OF TEACHING.—When we examine the moral teachings of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, we find that, like the teachings of any great moral leader, they express principles of living which are recognized as eminently good, as soon as they are understood. Jesus had a way of talking about common duties so as to glorify them with religious significance. If we feel the spiritual greatness of Jesus and of his way of interpreting morality, the critical difficulty of exactly identifying the words of Jesus is of comparatively little importance. The spirit of his teachings and the nature

of his ethical ideals are preserved in the convictions which he inspired in those who loved him quite as truly as in the precise words which he uttered.

**JESUS AND THE SCRIBES.**—Scribism is a form of religion which is concerned first of all with the content of a written system. The scribe gives moral guidance by "applying" fixed precepts to specific cases. Always the sanctity of the system is put first. Human needs must adapt themselves to the system. Jesus' attitude was precisely the reverse. Systems must be adapted to man, not man to systems. Jesus determined what was right by a direct valuation of the circumstances rather than by the exegesis of a written law. Even when he quoted Scripture to support his position, we feel that his real reason for deciding as he did lay in his understanding of life itself rather than in the mere appeal to Scripture. The reader who is looking for a systematized discussion of ethics in the Gospels will be disappointed. We have a series of detached pictures. Frequently a saying of Jesus is recorded in relation to some particular incident. Jesus was evidently more concerned with the actual life of people around him than he was with theoretical questions. Many of his teachings are simply commentaries on incidents which he had observed.

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS MUST NOT USE JESUS' TEACHINGS LEGALISTICALLY.**—The above-mentioned fact leads to certain significant consequences in our study of Christian ethics. It means that if we try to use the Gospels as if they were formal compendiums, we are misinterpreting the ethics of Jesus. Even if we had an infallibly correct account of all his sayings, we should be hopelessly

out of harmony with the mind of Jesus if we were to use these sayings as the scribes used the teachings of the Old Testament. Christian ethics is something quite different from scribism.

**JESUS' DEVOTION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.**—We have already seen how the Hebrew conception that God would ultimately establish his rule of righteousness on earth had served to keep alive the faith and devotion of Jews who had every reason to be discouraged. Jesus reaffirmed this belief in the coming Kingdom of God. It constituted the standard by which all conduct was to be judged. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."<sup>1</sup> Every right-minded man should aim to become a worthy citizen of this Kingdom. Jesus' opposition to the legalism of the scribes was based on his conviction that the conventional standards of living which they inculcated were insufficient to entitle one to membership in the Kingdom. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>2</sup> In the place of a list of virtues or a system of commandments, Jesus urged a glowing devotion to the Kingdom of God. This led to a relative depreciation of petty ritualistic requirements. These are mere outer deeds, worthless unless they accompany and promote the inner life of devotion to the Kingdom. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer them that are entering to go in."<sup>3</sup> On the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 6:33.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5:20.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 23:13.

other hand, the ideal of the Kingdom involved such rigorous scrutiny of motives and conduct that one should be conscious of having acted under the eye of God. "Take heed that ye do not your righteous acts before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father who is in heaven."<sup>4</sup> "Thy Father, who seeth in secret, shall reward thee."<sup>5</sup>

WHAT DID JESUS MEAN BY THE KINGDOM OF GOD?— This is a question which has exercised the minds of scholars for almost the past half-century.<sup>6</sup> As the sayings of Jesus have been studied in the light of the current conceptions of his day, it has become clear that he was addressing people in terms of an ideal which had been a motive for religious devotion ever since the time of the prophets. It was a commonplace of popular thought that at some time—it was hoped that the time would be soon—God would come in a dramatic way to judge nations and men and to establish his rule upon earth after destroying the wicked and all their works. Jesus employed this popular picture. He portrayed the Kingdom as something which would come suddenly, surprising men with the remorseless judgment of God. He depicted the joy of those who should win God's approval and the dreadful punishment of those who were found to be rebellious. These were current ways of thinking and could be used by Jesus directly as motives for right living. It is idle to speculate as to how literally he meant the pictures to be taken. One who

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 6:1.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. 6:18.

<sup>6</sup> Burton (*The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 211 ff.) assembles the utterances of Jesus on the subject of the Kingdom, along with significant passages from Jewish writers.

spoke preferably in parables, as Jesus did, was more concerned with the inner attitude induced by an appeal than with the question of whether the appeal clothed itself in history or in poetry. The dramatic form of the imagery of the Kingdom was admirably suited to arouse the emotions of men and thus lead them to *feel* the seriousness of moral behavior in the sight of God.

**THE KINGDOM IS A SOCIAL ORDER IN WHICH GOOD WILL SHALL BE SUPREME.**—However and whenever it should be established, the Kingdom was portrayed as a regime where the will of God was to reign. Those forces which oppose his will would be abolished. This meant that there would be no place in the Kingdom for those who did not love and follow God's will. The all-important thing, then, was not to speculate as to the time and the way in which the Kingdom was to be introduced; it was rather to ask the solemn question as to who would be fitted to be citizens of the Kingdom when it should be established. Only men of good will could find a place there. The establishment of such a social order was so stupendous a task that God alone could accomplish it. It was no merely relative improvement of things; it was a new kind of society, demanding a new kind of living on the part of those who belonged to it.

**THE KINGDOM CONTRASTED WITH THE PRESENT AGE.**—Those who were loyal to the Kingdom must be ready to suffer disabilities while they remained here. Their devotion to God would mean their exclusion from participation in many current practices and might easily

bring persecution upon them. Jesus expected a magnificent courage on the part of his followers. They were to be so sure of the supreme importance of the Kingdom that they could defy the powers of this world. Material possessions, worldly advantage, even intimate personal relationships, must all be held subordinate to the requirements of the Kingdom.

**A DIFFICULTY TO BE RECOGNIZED.**—This uncompromising form of the teaching of Jesus raises a real difficulty for Christians today. We no longer look for a catastrophic revolution in history. The ideal of the “Kingdom of God” has been transformed in later thinking into the conception of a righteous society which is to be evolved out of the existing social structure. The loyal Christian today scarcely expects to live to see the perfect realization of the Kingdom. He must find his reward in the joy of working with God for the building of the true order rather than in the expectation of being transplanted into a heavenly utopia. When we realize that Jesus portrayed the Kingdom in terms of opposition to the present social order rather than in terms of the evolution of a better social order, the discovery is often disturbing. But the difficulty thus created loses much of its force when we realize the character of the Kingdom life.

**THE KINGDOM LIFE MAY BE LIVED HERE AND NOW.**—Jesus made it clear that the interim between the present day and the establishment of God’s reign was not to be merely a period of waiting for the great consummation. It was primarily a time for getting ready for the privileges of citizenship when the Kingdom

should be established. The life of preparation for God's fuller reign is itself an expression of God's reign in the heart. The disciple of Jesus is to begin at once to practice a way of living in accordance with the purposes of God. He is to come to grips with the destructive forces of evil. His mind is to be like fertile soil for the good seed of the Kingdom. He is to be active in God's business like a good steward and representative, using his resources most effectively for the highest purposes. By using his talents he is to increase them, going on to larger opportunity and looking forward in spite of all discouragements to a consummation which is as certain as the supremacy of God.

#### WHAT ARE THE SUPREME VALUES IN THE KINGDOM?

—The Kingdom life springs from a profound experience of companionship with God. It expresses itself in those thoughts and deeds in which God shares. God is the loving Father who desires the good of all his children. The citizens of God's realm are to share this attitude. The parables of Jesus are for the most part taken from the realms of everyday life, and they betray such a sympathetic appreciation of the motives and ideals of peasants, artisans, tradesmen, housewives, that we feel the wholesome interest of Jesus in living people. The very spirit which would put the welfare of men before the technical requirements of the Jewish law would also protest against sacrificing any real present good for a mere formal reward in the future.

THE PROGRAM OF THE KINGDOM IS NOT A NEW  
LEGALISM.—Jesus did not leave a social or political or

industrial program to his followers. He left, instead, the stern insistence on supreme loyalty to the purposes of God. Every generation, if it would share the spirit of Jesus, must share that loyalty. But every generation must assume for itself the responsibility for determining just what that loyalty involves in the way of organization. The social program of a Christian today in a culture which, in part at least, approves Christian ideals may be very different from the program of a Christian in the ancient world when suspicion was attached to any profession of loyalty to a kingdom other than that of the Caesars. In lands, however, in which dictatorship is in vogue or war in progress the individual may experience a strange similarity in situation to that of the early Christians.

**THE CREATIVE SPIRIT OF LOVING GOOD WILL.**—Loyalty to the Kingdom means the spirit of unfailing love toward our fellow-men. The deeds of helpfulness recorded in the accounts of Jesus' life show how completely he identified himself with the interests of people around him. He did something much harder than to draw up a formal program for social betterment. He shared the life of men. He frequently opposed existing standards purely on the ground that these ignored primary human needs. Instead of deliberately revising the current rules for fasting, he called attention to the psychological relationship between fasting and grief and demanded that ritual should promote honest recognition of human experience.<sup>7</sup> He criticized the strict interpretation of Sabbath requirements because

<sup>7</sup> Mark 2:18 ff.; Matt. 9:14 ff.; Luke 5:33 ff.

these concentrated attention on rules and regulations rather than on the human needs which love discerned.<sup>8</sup> In discussing the delicate question of divorce, he appealed frankly to fundamental human nature over against technical regulations which might be used as a cloak for selfishness. We are to ask how God created man and woman rather than to inquire what Moses wrote about the matter.<sup>9</sup> Instead of trying technically to define a neighbor, Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, who embodied the spirit of neighborliness, in contrast to the unneighborly, though ecclesiastically correct, behavior of the priest and the Levite.<sup>10</sup>

In brief, the Kingdom of God is of such a character that membership in it is conditioned on a spirit of loving good will toward men. This spirit will inevitably be creative. It will seek out ways in which men may be served in the spirit of love. It will, in time, create organizations through which this service may be more effectively rendered. But it is always greater than any organizations. It is a social spirit, in that it demands right social relations between men; but it is at the same time a spirit of revolutionary criticism when confronted with institutions which have become formal or oppressive.

**THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE KINGDOM.**—While, of course, the disciple of Jesus must be kind and helpful to enemy as well as to friend, yet it was only with those who shared the inner ideals of the early Christian that

<sup>8</sup> Mark 2:23 ff.; 3:1-5; Matt. 12:11 ff.; Luke 6:1ff.

<sup>9</sup> Mark 10:2-12; Matt. 19:3-12.

<sup>10</sup> Luke 10:29 ff.

he could be intimate. The followers of Jesus felt themselves to be members of a select company already living the Kingdom life. This fellowship was a source of spiritual strength. It carried with it an especial responsibility for those of the brotherhood. For only as this brotherhood should be true to the Kingdom could it be expected that others would be won. A genuinely religious society thus came into existence, not by any formal organization, but through the sheer necessity of mutual help and encouragement.

In this brotherhood certain special relationships became possible. All class distinctions were repudiated. No one within the brotherhood could claim the right to rule over his fellows. All were to be equally humble and equally devoted to the Kingdom. There was thus a glimpse of the kind of society which would prevail when the Kingdom should have come in its fulness. Meantime, the little group of disciples constituted a special social order in which the principles of the Kingdom rather than the principles of worldly institutions prevailed.

Thus began the church as the embodiment of a new order of society, a set of little groups bound together by fellow-feeling, by common purpose, and by the opposition of the world around them. The little bands of Christians were not in a position to dictate moral rules to the existing order, but they were drawn to personal membership and group experience in an order which for them replaced and transcended the then dominant world-order. Although Jesus' teaching seemed not to have affected the world in any deep and

permanent way, yet it had fallen like seed, and his spirit had been imparted to a church which was destined to produce gradually the changes which his teaching and spirit implied. This process still goes on.

**GENERAL SUMMARY OF JESUS' IDEAL.**—(1) The primary duty of every man is to become a citizen in the realm of God. This presupposes a confident faith that the ultimate of history is the establishment of the reign of God. Jesus bade men judge all conduct, all earthly advantages, all institutions, in the light of this supreme consummation. Men are to seek first the Kingdom of God.

2. In order to discover what is required of a citizen of the Kingdom, one must know the mind of God. God's mind is expressed in the attitude of righteous, fatherly love. One may trust the love of God and may be led through this experience of trust to discover what love is and what love prompts one to do.

3. This spirit of love leads one to look beyond conventional rules. One must always seek directly to understand human needs. If conventionally accepted rules meet the need, well and good; if they do not, one must go beyond the specific requirements.

4. The supreme duty of those who love and trust God is to live the Kingdom life here and now, regardless of immediate consequences. Good will may be exercised before the Kingdom comes in its completeness.

5. Those who possess faith in the Kingdom will constitute a religious brotherhood, separated from the world in spirit. In this brotherhood will be exhibited precisely the virtues which mark the Kingdom of God.

It thus constitutes a new society, religious and moral in character.

6. In his method of determining what is morally required, Jesus was what we today would call an empiricist. He was never satisfied with a formal commandment, however sacred it was. He insisted on seeing the precise circumstances in each instance and in adapting conduct to the specific needs of each case. He thus gained the reputation of depreciating religious authority. But this was in the interests of the supremacy of human values. Religious reverence must not excuse one from asking seriously what ought to be done in each specific case.

7. Jesus left no system of ethics. His teachings were for the most part occasional, usually being the interpretation of the practice of loving good will in specific cases. A Christian ethics must be true to this spirit animating the sayings of Jesus. To make a complete and final list of precepts out of the teachings of Jesus is historically impossible; and if attempted it would violate the spirit of Jesus' own teaching.

8. The moral life, as Jesus portrayed it, involves a profound religious faith. Merely to attempt to carry out Jesus' instructions without sharing the religious content of his consciousness is not enough. The supreme good is to experience a spiritual oneness of purpose with the loving Heavenly Father. Anything which stands in the way of this experience must be removed in order to permit a genuine Christian life.

9. The virtues most stressed by Jesus are those essential to the practice of loving good will; some of these

are: sincerity or utter truthfulness of spirit in the sight of God (as contrasted with hypocrisy); humility, involving honest recognition of one's faults and weakness, and the willingness to learn better ways of living (in contrast to pharisaic self-righteous pride); trust in God, so strong and constant that one will be able to endure hardship when necessary, sure that God's reward is above all else; self-denial, as the fruit of such trust, enabling one to devote himself utterly to the Kingdom, even at the cost of hardship (in contrast with indulgence in luxury or wealth); a forgiving spirit, as the expression of a Godlike generosity; helpfulness toward others (in contrast to self-interest); inner purity (as contrasted with mere outward respectability); evangelistic zeal as an expression of a generous desire to share the Christian life with others.

HOW ARE THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS TO BE USED TODAY?—In the light of our study of the ideal of Jesus, certain principles for the use of his teachings in modern life become evident. The observation of these would prevent much perplexity.

1. *The teacher is greater than the teachings.*—It should never be forgotten that all the recorded sayings of Jesus would occupy only a small fragment of the total time of his ministry. The Gospels are windows through which we may catch glimpses of the life of Jesus. The teachings must never be a rigid wall restricting our vision to what lies on this side of the wall. The Apostle Paul and the uplifting message of the Fourth Gospel reveal to us the larger inspiration of a vital relationship to Christ. The teachings of Jesus must be so used as

to make us better acquainted with him, never as a substitute for such acquaintance.

2. *The best guidance for Christian conduct is the inner experience of the spirit of Jesus.*—Jesus' chief concern was to make men *feel* the reality of the moral considerations which were so clear to him. When the lawyer tried to get Jesus to define the word "neighbor," Jesus replied by telling the story of the Good Samaritan, in order to elicit from the lawyer an *appreciation* of a neighborly deed (Luke 10:25 ff.). In drawing the contrast between his ideals and the current practices of the Pharisees, Jesus insisted that the all-important thing was to feel the inner power of right-mindedness rather than to split hairs over definitions. His supreme aim was to create in his disciples the living experience of creative good will, so that moral deeds might be the spontaneous outgrowth of a right spirit rather than the slavish following of external rules.

The historical understanding of the teachings of Jesus, therefore, leads us inevitably to the conception of Christian ethics as a never ending creative task on the part of the disciples of Jesus. The teachings of Jesus are the indispensable means by which we may attempt to become so intimately acquainted with him that we may think and act worthily of him. But the spirit of loving, creative good will leads true Christians to be ever learning from the facts of life as well as from the precepts in the New Testament.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Can we treat the Gospels as if they were complete accounts of the teachings of Jesus?
2. Do we find that the Gospels always agree in their interpretation of a saying of Jesus? Compare the version of the Beatitudes in Matt. 5:3-12 with the version in Luke 6:20-26. Compare Jesus' teaching concerning divorce as given in Matt. 19:3-12 with the account in Mark 10:2-12. Compare especially Matt. 19:9 with Mark 10:11. Is it always easy to be sure precisely what Jesus taught?
3. Did Jesus seem to be concerned to give a complete system of ethics? What seems to you to have been his chief concern?
4. How did the scribes expound ethics? What was the attitude of Jesus toward the scribes? Are the teachings of Jesus ever expounded today by the same method which the scribes used in expounding the Scriptures in their day? Would a tabulation of the teachings of Jesus give us a complete Christian ethics?
5. How did Jesus picture the relation between the Kingdom of God and the present age? How do we picture it in modern thought? Is it an advantage or a disadvantage that the teachings of Jesus contain no specific directions for the organization of modern society?
6. What social attitude results from devotion to the Kingdom of God? How does such devotion make one bold in criticizing customary practices? How does the attitude of loyalty to the Kingdom of God prevent one from yielding to other loyalties if these are injurious to human welfare?
7. In what respects did the brotherhood of disciples constitute a peculiar group? Could the Kingdom life be more perfectly lived within the brotherhood than outside? If so, why?
8. How can the teachings of Jesus be used to acquaint us with the spirit of Jesus himself? Can the teachings be properly

understood without such an acquaintance with Jesus? How does the historical interpretation of the Gospels help us rightly to use the precepts of Jesus?

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## CHAPTER IV

### CHRISTIANITY IN A NON-CHRISTIAN WORLD

IT IS difficult for us who live in a so-called "Christian civilization" to picture the world in which the primitive disciples lived. They were generally regarded by their Jewish acquaintances as a group of misguided fanatics. The most precious elements in the early Christian faith aroused distrust and ridicule. Persecution began early. The Christians were thus made acutely conscious of living in an unfriendly world. This very unfriendliness naturally intensified their devotion to Christ. It mattered little whether their conduct brought approval and happiness in this world. It mattered much whether they could continue to enjoy the approval of Christ. Under the stress of persecution, they came more and more to think of themselves as a "little flock" set apart from the rest of mankind by the fact that their citizenship was in heaven. They must endure the trials inevitable in an evil age as best they might, setting their hopes securely on the glory to be theirs when the Kingdom should come with the reappearing of the Lord.

THE LIFE OF THE BROTHERHOOD.—Since Jesus might come at any time, his disciples must be ever watchful, ready at any time to welcome his judgment. The early disciples gathered in their assemblies or

churches to recall the life and teachings of Jesus, to confirm one another in the faith, to pray for guidance, and to help one another to live in accordance with the requirements of Christ.<sup>1</sup> So completely did they subordinate all worldly interests to the religious life of the group that in at least one instance they gave up all claims to private property.<sup>2</sup> They "continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and in prayers."<sup>3</sup> To engage in common worship and in discussion of the way of life, to watch over the brethren so as to keep the faith and the conduct of every member of the group pure, to testify courageously their conviction that Jesus was Messiah, to preach and to heal in his name—these were the chief activities of the Christians in the early days of the church.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Acts 2:42.

<sup>2</sup> "All that believed were together and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, as every man had need" (Acts 2:44-45).

<sup>3</sup> Acts 2:42.

<sup>4</sup> A word should be said here concerning the communism mentioned in the Book of Acts. It was totally different from modern communistic theories. Modern communism is primarily a political system with an announced goal of world-revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat. These early Christians had no theory of production or rule. They simply rid themselves of individual earthly possessions and used the proceeds to provide for the needs of anyone in the group who might be in want. There is no hint of a program for the reconstruction of the industrial order. All that was involved was that Christians should so love one another that "no one said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own" (Acts 4:32). Whenever production of goods is mentioned in the New Testament we find the uncritical acceptance of the existing wage or slave system, although the principles of Jesus assured its ultimate supplanting.

## THE BROTHERHOOD AS A SEPARATIST COMMUNITY.—

The early Christians did not expect the Christian ideal to be realized in the social and political order as it then existed. Existing institutions they thought of as belonging to "this present evil age." The Christian group was like a little island in a sea of wickedness. Its life was, as far as possible, self-contained. Relations with the "world" were perilous.

Love not the world, nor the things in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.<sup>5</sup>

THE SINGLE-MINDEDNESS OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ETHICS.—The point of view set forth above made it possible for the early Christians to avoid many of the perplexities which arise whenever conduct must be so ordered as to fit into existing conditions. Since the highest good was looked for in the coming Kingdom rather than in the present order, immediate consequences could be ignored. If a rigorous devotion to the will of Christ brought suffering or privation, the Christian could glory in this evidence that he preferred Christ to all worldly benefits.

This single-minded attitude has both its noble and its unfortunate sides. It makes for a wonderful devotion. To be true to Christ at all costs, to be ready to defy the allurements of comfort or wealth or reputation for the sake of following Christ—this heroic attitude wins our reverent approval and stirs us to a deeper consecration.

<sup>5</sup> I John 2:15-17.

But the dangers of such an unworldly attitude are also apparent. "Peculiar" customs may be valued just because they distinguish the Christian from the non-Christian. Aloofness from the world may exclude the culture and the learning with which Christian life might be enriched and beautified. As a matter of fact, this early Christian attitude was inevitably modified as the church came to plan for a long-continued existence in the world instead of for an imminent "end of the world." At the same time the single-minded devotion of these early Christians is a perpetual challenge to men not to permit their allegiance to Christ to be obscured by lesser interests. A religion worth suffering and dying for is a religion of spiritual power.

**THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT DID NOT REMAIN SEPARATIST.** —The early disciples could not entirely avoid contacts with the established customs of the society in which they lived. Since the Christians for the most part came from humbler classes, they must perforce earn their living in accordance with the industrial customs in existence. But these customs were often implicated with pagan worship or with social practices of doubtful morality. We today regard slavery as un-Christian; but the early Christians could not withdraw from the slave system. The Roman Empire was a stubborn fact, and Christians had to find some way in which to reconcile their loyalty to the Kingdom of God with the practical requirements of earthly government. The early Jewish conceptions of the will of God had to meet Hellenistic ideals. The Apostle Paul's courageous fight for the full recognition of Gentiles who had not

fulfilled the Jewish law was simply the forerunner of a long development in which the "Hellenization of Christianity" was accomplished. The very power of the Christian movement carried it far beyond the boundaries of the early brotherhood. It became in three or four centuries the bearer of civilization instead of being a separatist group.

**LATER ATTEMPTS TO REINTRODUCE THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN IDEALS.**—The external expansion of Christianity was not entirely a triumph of Christian ideals. Everyone who has studied the history of the church knows how frequently it became corrupt. But there have always been preachers and leaders who frankly faced the facts and called the church back to lofty ideals. It has often been assumed that the surest way in which to purify Christianity is to summon men back to the New Testament teachings. In thus challenging conventional ideals, the reforming group usually met ridicule and persecution and thus found itself strangely repeating the experience of the early Christians. This reinforced them in their conviction of the correctness of their position. Ignoring the fact that the early brotherhood inevitably was compelled by historical circumstances to develop into something different and not realizing that the way out of any difficulty is to look forward rather than backward, conscientious men have frequently attempted to purify Christianity by reproducing literally the life of the early brotherhood.

The Anabaptists in the period of the Protestant Reformation took this position. They insisted that true Christians must cease to compromise with the

corrupt world. The existing church seemed to them to be hopelessly entangled in evil. They insisted that every member of the new brotherhood should be baptized anew as an expression of personal dedication to Christ. They demanded the complete separation of church and state, in order that the Christian group might be free to obey Christ without being subject to governmental discipline. They refused to take oath (because Jesus had forbidden it) or to bear arms. They frequently attempted some form of communism. One early Anabaptist document declared: "He that hath property may not partake of the Lord's Supper."

This separatist conception dominates the ethical ideals of several religious bodies in Protestantism. A profound distrust of "worldly" practices prevails in these bodies. There is a strong tendency for members of the faith to live in exclusive communities where the ideals and practices can be maintained without friction with the world. Simplicity of dress is often emphasized as a mark of emancipation from the dictates of fashion. The refusal to take oath or to bear arms eliminates any aggressive share in political or national life. There is a serious attempt literally to reproduce New Testament practices and rites. We see in these communities a beautiful Christlike simplicity and devotion. The willingness to be unpopular, to defy custom, and to suffer penalties in wartime is eloquent testimony to the power of a Christian conscience to hold men steadfast. But such an unyielding code of morals can be maintained only by ignoring or evading relationships which other Christians frankly face. There is always the subtle

temptation to take pride in the peculiar practices which distinguish the "true believers" from less strict Christians. The seclusion which is practiced leads inevitably to a depreciation of culture and usually to a suspicious attitude toward any form of education which is not doctrinally controlled. Sooner or later the neglect of liberal education deprives the denomination of broad-minded leaders, and the more ambitious among the younger generation become restless and dissatisfied. Almost inevitably these groups develop liberal tendencies and eventually repeat the history of the early Christian separatists. Christian devotion cannot permanently be satisfied with aloofness from the world. Sooner or later it is translated into a desire to Christianize the social order. But this involves entering into the life of the age and courageously interpreting the culture of the day in a Christian spirit.

**THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN SPIRIT.**—The inevitable way in which Christianity bursts the limitations of any narrow system should open our eyes to its true character. To the early Christians the world was incorrigibly evil. But after a few centuries men began to talk of a "Christian world" and to plan for the direct guidance of all phases of human life by the church. The modern separatist bodies referred to in this chapter preserve for us an indispensable aspect of Christian loyalty when they insist that Christianity cannot be identified with the easy-going practices of the world at large. But, when they assume that God wills precisely the same content of conduct for the

twentieth century as for the first, they overlook the fact that the spirit of Jesus is one of creative adventure rather than of formal conformity. Just as Jesus himself refused to confine his ministry to the conventionally approved circle of religious duties but fellowshipped with outcasts and nonconformists, just as the Apostle Paul insisted that Christianity was not to be found in distinctions between Jew and Gentile but in the living power of Christ, so Christianity has always shown creative power when it has gone forth to transform the existing system in the spirit of Christ. It is true today, as it was when the Apostle Paul first uttered it, that "the letter killeth; the spirit maketh alive."

The sharp conflict with the world has become real again for many modern Christians whose consciences have required them to take issue with the state or with conventional ideas in the communities in which they live. Men and women have chosen to sacrifice their freedom, their possessions, or their lives rather than to bow down to human authority that seemed in conflict with Christian duty. The great German leader, Pastor Martin Niemoeller, and literally thousands of others have stood out with heroic steadfastness against what they believed to be wrong. In such cases of conflict the choice of the higher good stands out with challenging and dramatic distinctness, witnessing that there is a higher order and that man's fullest good is to be found in allegiance to that higher order.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What did the phrase "this present evil age" mean to the early Christians? How long did they expect the present world-order to last? How did their world-view differ from ours today? Would this difference of world-view make any difference in ethical ideals? If so, what?
2. Was a Christian expected to be an ardent patriot in New Testament times? Is there any difference between early Christian ethics and modern ethics in this respect? How do you account for the difference?
3. A word frequently used in early Christian exhortations is "single-minded." What did it mean? What are the advantages of a single-minded attitude? Today we often hear the ideal of "100 per cent Americanism" praised. Does such single-minded patriotism usually mean a Christian attitude toward immigrants from other lands? What is the moral danger in "single-mindedness"? Is aloofness from other people conducive to the best morality? What was the attitude of Jesus in this matter?
4. Church historians speak of the "Hellenization of Christianity" in the course of the first three centuries. This involved the intermingling of Christian ideals with the interests of the Greco-Roman culture. Did this intermingling make for a broader type of Christian culture? Did it involve any moral dangers? What became of the primitive Palestinian type of Christianity? Why did it give way to the Hellenistic type?
5. Do you know of any separatist denominations today? Do they feel that they are keeping closer to the New Testament than the denominations which are not so "strict"? Is it possible for us today to feel toward the world exactly as the early Christians did? If we think of Christian ethics as the attempt to obey exactly the New Testament precepts are we likely to be sensitive to all the moral problems of our own day? Professor Rauschenbusch tells of a farmer whose milk was so dirty that it was refused by an inspector. He was so angry that he swore. His

church disciplined him for swearing but said nothing about the ethics of trying to sell dirty milk for babies to drink. Does the New Testament say anything about swearing? Does it say anything about standards of cleanliness for milk-producers? Which of the two faults do you think Jesus would most severely condemn?

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## CHAPTER V

### THE REGULATION OF CULTURE BY THE CHURCH

THE Roman Catholic church was for centuries the one existing form of Christianity in western Europe. Its adherents today outnumber those of any other form of Christianity. It has worked out a distinct conception of Christian ethics which is influential not only within that church but also to a greater or less extent in some branches of Protestantism. The present chapter undertakes to show how this type of Christian ethics became prevalent and to indicate its chief features.

THE PROBLEM OF DIFFERENCES OF OPINION IN THE EARLY CHURCH.—Every Christian in the primitive church agreed that in order to be eligible to the Kingdom one must live so as to receive the favorable judgment of Christ when he should come. But there was room for difference of opinion on many points. Ought a Christian to observe the rite of circumcision? No clear teaching of Jesus could be cited on this point. What ought to be the Christian's attitude toward meat offered to idols? How should marriage be valued? What should be the Christian's attitude toward the Roman government? What ought to be the content of Christian belief? What should be done in the case of a

Christian who had grievously sinned? On what conditions were forgiveness and restoration possible. Early Christian literature abounds in the discussion of questions on which Christians did not agree. In case of disagreement, who was right?

**THE NEED OF AN AUTHORITATIVE DEFINITION OF CHRISTIANITY.**—The confusion arising from divergent voices in early Christendom could be eliminated if it could be made clear without a peradventure what Christianity really teaches on each matter. Everyone, for example, would be obligated to obey a precept of Jesus if such a precept could be shown to be genuine and if its meaning were clear. What was needed was so definite and authoritative a declaration of Christian principles that un-Christian conduct could be laid to an evil will and not to excusable ignorance.

**THE APOSTOLIC TEST OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.**—By the middle of the second century the need for some authoritative definition of Christian truth was acute. Men who had no real historical connection with early Christianity were advocating fantastic doctrines. It became imperative to distinguish "true" Christianity from spurious forms. For the deciding of this important question, who could best report the mind of Christ? It was declared that those whom he had chosen to be with him and to receive special instruction—the apostles—were to be accepted as the official interpreters of Christ. The Catholic church came to consciousness as the transmitter and defender of that content of faith and practice which it was believed that Christ had intrusted to his apostles and which the suc-

cessors of the apostles (the bishops) were authorized to maintain in its purity throughout all time. Obedience to the officials of the church was the supreme duty of every Christian. To organize or to join an unapostolic group of Christians was branded as sin. To object to the doctrines approved by the bishops was rebellion against Christ. Schism and heresy were inexcusable forms of insubordination.

The church became the institution which laid down the pattern of living for individuals, for communities, and for nations. In its missionary work it undertook to transform the lives of crude pagan tribes in Europe and elsewhere. As the diversity of cultures with which it dealt was very great, its ethical task was an enormous one. The culture of peoples and of nations could be made over only gradually, so that there would in given times and places be varying combinations of earlier ways and of customs and ideals brought in by Christianity. There was, however, a pattern of thought and action to which with varying degrees of success the church sought to bring people to conform.

**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PROGRAM FOR A CHRISTIAN LIFE.**—Since, according to Catholic theology, every human being is born sinful, the first essential is regeneration. This is accomplished through baptism. After baptism (which is normally administered to infants) comes training in faith and morals by the church. The child must learn to believe what the church teaches in the realm of doctrine and to appreciate the value of the discipline of the church. After the proper instruction in belief and in principles of moral living, the child

is confirmed, thus becoming a responsible member of the church. From this time on, each individual is expected to meet his father-confessor at the proper times and to lay bare before him his conduct. While one is required to confess only mortal sins (those which so alienate the sinner from God that he is liable to eternal punishment), one has the privilege of confessing also venial sins (those which do not cause complete alienation from God). Thus through the confessional the individual is brought regularly under the supervision of the church. The father-confessor tells the penitent what must be done in order to repair the wrong and to be reinstated in God's favor. The church thus takes responsibility for determining the kind and amount of satisfaction which must be rendered by the sinner in order to be saved. The sacraments of the church, attendance on Mass, the reading of devotional literature, and the practice of prayer are all urged as aids to a holy life.

**THE IDEAL OF A CHURCH-CONTROLLED CULTURE.**—No greater contrast could be imagined than that between the little, despised, and persecuted group of early Christians and the Catholic church of the Middle Ages with its enormous power and prestige. As the Roman Empire became impotent, the church gradually took up some of the most important tasks of good government. Eventually came the glorious dream of Christianizing the whole world. But, since a Christian life was conceived as consisting in obedience to the church's voice, so a Christian social order was conceived as one in which the influence of the church

should be decisive. It is difficult to overemphasize the service rendered by the church during the Dark Ages when there was no other strong uplifting power. To the church we owe the preservation of whatever culture was retained from the classical days. To the church men looked for a Christian restraint on the ambitions of warriors and princes. The scholars of the church examined the field of human living with such thoroughness that all questions of ethics received a marvelously detailed analysis. The influence of the Catholic church is incalculably great in our Western civilization.

**THE CONTENT OF CATHOLIC ETHICS.**—Catholicism keeps constantly before men the primary duty of obedience to the divine requirements. It puts in the foreground the picture of man's eternal destiny in the next world and declares that man's fate will be determined by the verdict passed on his character and conduct by God at the time of judgment. Since all men are sinners, the primary moral duty is to avail one's self of the divine provisions for the forgiveness of sin. The penitential discipline of the church is administered by the priests for the benefit of all who will submit to it. Attendance on the religious services of the church, loyalty to the teachings of the church, education under church influences, and reading books approved by the church are all stressed. In the confessional the Catholic Christian is brought face to face with a comprehensive list of duties which every Christian is expected to fulfil. In religious instruction and in publications Christian attitudes are urged in the realms of the family, the state, industry, and informal social life. In all ethical dis-

cussions the conception of responsibility to God is evident. The Catholic system of teaching ethics and of controlling behavior has something of the thoroughness of military discipline about it.<sup>1</sup>

**SOME QUESTIONABLE ASPECTS OF THE CATHOLIC IDEAL.**—Catholicism holds that the highest morality cannot be attained unless the supreme authority of the church be recognized. In our day, however, there exist strong secular institutions which promote the public welfare. A Catholic feels that Christian standards are not being maintained unless these are correlated with the authority of the Catholic church. The best form of government would be that in which the Catholic church is legally recognized. A purely secular government, where religious liberty is granted equally to all forms of religion, fails to give to the Catholic church the position demanded by its conception of Christianity. Public school education, freed from religious domina-

<sup>1</sup> The kind of control exercised by the church through the confessional may be seen by examining any manual for the guidance of father-confessors. Mortal sins must be confessed. The following sins are specifically treated in one authorized manual (C. Telch, *Epitome theologiae moralis* [Innsbruck, 1930]): doubting or denying the Catholic faith; despairing of one's salvation; complaining or blaspheming against God and his ordinances; speaking disrespectfully against the church or the sacraments; reading evil books or periodicals (liberal, socialist, or irreligious literature); belonging to a secret society; receiving the sacrament unworthily; perjury; failure to fulfil a vow; failure to attend Mass; failure to attend church at Easter; eating meat on fast days; disobedience to parents; failure to provide for the physical, moral, and religious welfare of one's children; hatred, jealousy, desire to injure another, or the use of violence toward another; idleness, thoughts of suicide, drunkenness, theft, bearing false witness, defamation of character; unchaste thoughts or actions; failure to fulfil marriage vows.

tion, seems less desirable than schools under church control. Any type of scientific or historical training which enables one to come to conclusions without also consulting the voice of the church is looked upon as tending in an anti-Christian direction. The embodiment into Christian ethics of any knowledge resulting from nonecclesiastical investigation is extremely difficult whenever such knowledge conflicts with the established doctrines of the church. The attempt to carry over the medieval ideal of church control into an age when politics and education have become so largely secularized involves friction. In a nonecclesiastical state the Catholic church will always seem to be scheming to gain a position of power. Thus in spite of the magnificent service rendered by this church in upholding Christian ideals and training children in moral habits, there exists in the modern world a strong prejudice against Catholicism. The ideal of church control is not welcomed in an age of democratic freedom.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What would be the advantage in the early church of an authoritative pronouncement as to what is required of a Christian? Why was it not possible to settle all questions by quoting what Jesus said? Would it be easy to determine whether circumcision should be required by asking what Jesus taught on the subject? How could an authoritative decision be reached on questions which Jesus did not discuss at all? Can the New Testament decide questions not mentioned in the New Testament? Are there any questions which Christians today must meet which are not mentioned in the New Testament?
2. How does Roman Catholicism propose to secure agreement among Christians? What gives the church a right to demand

the obedience of Christians, according to the Catholic conception? State the doctrine of apostolic authority.

3. Ignatius of Antioch, writing early in the second century, said that a true Christian ought to obey the bishop as he would obey God. Why should such obedience be required? Why were heresy and schism so bitterly condemned? How do Catholics today feel toward non-Catholic bodies of Christians?
4. What are the essentials of a Christian life, according to Catholicism? Why must one be baptized? What is the confessional? What is penance? Do you think Protestants would be more conscientious if they were required to give account of their conduct regularly? How does the confessional furnish an opportunity for moral guidance by the church?
5. What was the attitude of medieval Catholicism toward the institutions of this world? How does this attitude differ from that of the early Christians? What is the Catholic program for Christianizing the social order? Is Catholicism satisfied with a purely secular state which gives equal rights to all forms of religion? Why do Catholics consider parochial schools superior? What is the attitude of the Catholic church toward freedom of teaching in the realms of history and of science?
6. Compare the influence of the Catholic church over a Catholic with the influence of a Protestant church over a Protestant. Which seems to you the greater? The utterances of the Catholic church are almost always treated with respect. Who authorizes such utterances? Individual Protestant ministers sometimes say foolish things. Are Catholic priests as likely to be unwise? Is the Catholic system better adapted than the Protestant system to give right of way to the best and wisest utterances?
7. A Catholic writer on ethics says: "Dogmatic toleration (meaning the recognition of 'an absolute right to practice false as well as true religions') is as eminently absurd a notion as can well be conceived. Only a disordered mind could seriously entertain it." Do you agree with this statement? How can a "true" religion be identified? How does Catholicism identify it? Does Catholicism recognize the moral value of critical inquiry?

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE ETHICS OF PROTESTANTISM

LUTHER was gradually led to a position where he had to choose between loyalty to the church and loyalty to his Christian conscience. The consequence was his complete denial of the authority of the Catholic church. This involved the weakening of the ideal of a church-controlled culture. Political conditions in Germany were such that this Protestant principle of freedom from church control could be positively used to promote the coveted independence of the German states from the authority of the Catholic emperor. There thus arose a new regime of freedom, both personal and political, in which the Catholic church ceased to be a controlling power.

Inasmuch as Christian conduct had been defined in terms of submission to the guidance of the church, this Protestant attitude called for a radical revision of ethical theory.

**SALVATION BY GRACE, NOT BY WORKS.**—Luther taught that instead of relying on the church for salvation, one must look to God alone. God in his mercy has provided in the work of Christ the means by which men may be justified. If, entirely repudiating all thought of personal merit, one confesses his complete sinfulness and accepts the divine provision in Christ, one may be justified by faith. The full divine merit of

Christ is then reckoned to the believer. He need no longer be worrying about his own frailties. He need not be solicitous about the requirements of the church. He may simply trust in Christ, knowing that this attitude of trust is the one thing which is completely pleasing to God. In this way the Christian life was freed from the jurisdiction of the church.

**THE MOTIVE FOR GOOD WORKS.**—But if salvation is not conditioned on good works, how may we be sure that the Christian will fulfil the requirements of morality? Will he not accept his freedom as an opportunity for lax standards of living? To the Roman Catholic this seems to be the logical outcome of Luther's position. But Luther himself trusted to the wonderful sentiment of gratitude which arises in the heart of the believer when he knows that his sins have all been freely forgiven. Out of this wealth of love the Christian will always be asking, not what he is privileged to do for his own enjoyment, but rather what he is constrained to do by his grateful devotion to Christ. Instead of performing good deeds for the sake of a reward, he performs them as the expression of an already existing love.

**HOW SHALL THE CHRISTIAN DETERMINE WHAT TO DO?**—This conception of the Christian life sets one free to follow his own Christian conscience, instead of depending on the commands of external authority. The pathway is thus open for a firsthand exploration of the needs of human life. The spirit of Jesus, which put the immediate interests of living people above the sanctity of any formal code, reappears in the ethical theory of

Luther. Acting in this spirit, Luther was able to make astonishing changes in Christian habits. He could abolish a host of the requirements of the Catholic church by submitting them to the test of Christian love. If the keeping of fasts and the doing of penance grows out of the motive of fear or of hope for a reward, it is un-Christian. Only that which is the spontaneous expression of Christian faith and love is truly Christian.

**THE TENDENCY TOWARD EMPHASIS ON DOCTRINAL ORTHODOXY.**—Primary emphasis was thus placed on the faith which justifies. But since justification is the free gift of God, men must look to God in order to discover the conditions on which it is granted. It would never do to substitute the speculations of man for the provisions which God has made. Lutheranism thus was led inevitably to insist on the biblical control of faith as the *sine qua non* of the Christian life. While it was asserted that a Christian was free to determine his moral duty after he was justified by faith, it was asserted with equal emphasis that in order to be justified he must accept certain doctrines required by God. It has often been assumed that those who unquestioningly accept conventional dogmas are morally better than those who insist on critical questions. The history of Protestantism abounds in instances where men with the spirit of Christ have been distrusted and persecuted because they did not give their assent to a doctrinal system. This attitude has made it difficult to do moral justice to any "new" conclusions concerning religion. It tends to stereotype Christian ethics and to exalt conventional conformity as a superior moral attitude.

THE NEW PROBLEM OF SOCIAL ETHICS IN PROTESTANTISM.—Roman Catholicism conceives the task of Christianizing the social order to be the establishment of church control over all culture. Protestantism, having repudiated the authority of the church, was compelled to formulate a different program. Lutheranism applied to the social problem the same moral theory which was used in the securing of personal morality. The individual Christian, moved by grateful love to Christ, was expected spontaneously to exhibit the spirit of Christ in all his relations with other men. The ruler of a state must express his Christianity by ruling as a disciple of Jesus. Likewise, the employer of labor must voluntarily exercise Christian love toward those whom he employs. The employee (whom Luther pictured as a "servant") must loyally serve the interests of his master.

Lutheran ethics laid great emphasis on the attitudes of the individual, tending toward personal piety and devotion to simple domestic and neighborly virtues but not developing a thoroughgoing interpretation of the ethics of wider social relations. As compared with Calvinism, Lutheran ethics has been less intent upon the development of a Christian social order and has been somewhat shy of discussion of social problems.

Yet the Lutheran spirit seems to have been favorable to a high type of social development, as witnessed by the outstanding social progress of Scandinavian countries, in which there is a high average of general welfare and culture. Also there is an effective interest in using national resources for the benefit of the people,

which is one of the major aims of social ethics. In Sweden,<sup>1</sup> for example, practically all public utilities are owned by the state or by municipalities. Railroads, telephones, and the plants for production of electric power are owned by the people and administered so effectively for their benefit that state enterprises pay the entire interest on the national debt and contribute in addition to the general resources. In Denmark it was Bishop Grundvig who was the originator of the "Folkschools." Thus religion gave inspiration for a fine social movement.

**THE MORAL EMPHASIS IN CALVINISM.**—Calvinistic Christianity, like Lutheranism, insisted that salvation was by grace alone. The hold of the Catholic church over Christians was thus broken. But the Bible was declared to contain not only the gospel of salvation by faith; it is also the law of God. If a Christian really wants to please God he can best accomplish this by obeying the precepts which God has revealed in his Holy Word. Calvinism thus has much more of legalism than has Lutheranism.

**THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE APPEAL TO THE BIBLE.**—Calvinism insisted that no claim of divine right on the part of a ruler could be permitted to stand if it contradicted the Word of God. The plain man, armed with Scripture, could defy constituted authorities. John Knox in Scotland rebuked Queen Mary, insisting that he must obey God rather than any human being, even if that human being were a queen. Calvinism was thus a vigorous revolutionary force. It

<sup>1</sup> See the *Nation*, July 15, 1939, pp. 70-71.

provided a way by which Christians might directly engage in political action.

**THE IDEAL OF A BIBLICAL THEOCRACY.**—In the place of the Catholic ideal of a church-controlled culture, Calvinism put the ideal of a biblically controlled culture. It was felt that the requirements of the Bible ought to be incorporated into the law of the land.<sup>2</sup> Such movements as that for the compulsory reading of the Bible in the public schools in our country are continuations of the Calvinistic spirit. Calvinism has made an important contribution to the belief that the social order *can* be Christianized. Nothing is too hard for God; and God's Word is capable of righting all wrongs if only men are compelled to obey it. So reasoned Calvinists.

**THE LIMITATIONS OF THE IDEAL OF A BIBLICAL THEOCRACY.**—As long as public sentiment is strongly Calvinistic, little difficulty is experienced in maintaining this ideal. But when, as is the case in our country, government rests frankly on the secular basis of the con-

<sup>2</sup> This ideal is expressed with cogent clearness in the *London-Amsterdam Confession of Faith* (1596):

“It is the office and duty of princes and magistrates, who, by the ordinances of God, are supreme governors under Him over all persons and causes within their realms and dominions, to suppress and root out by their authority all false ministries, voluntary religions, and counterfeit worship of God, . . . . and on the other hand to establish and maintain by their laws every part of God's Word, His pure religion and true ministry, to cherish and protect all such as are careful to worship God according to His Word, and to lead a godly life in all peace and loyalty; yea to enforce all their subjects, whether civil or religious, to do their duty to God and men, protecting and restraining the evil, according to God hath commanded, whose lieutenants they are here on earth.”

sent of all the people without reference to religious creed, there arises a protest against "Puritanism" and a ridicule of "blue laws" which represent the convictions of only a portion of the population. The slogan of "personal liberty," even though it is often employed in the interest of doubtful practices, gains much of its popular support from the feeling that churchmen are more concerned to make everyone conform to their standards than to discover what humanity really needs. It is difficult for the believer in a biblical theocracy to have entire sympathy with ethical ideals which grow merely out of human experience rather than out of a study of the Bible. With the disestablishment of the church in New England went the possibility of Christianizing the social order in the fashion originally contemplated by Calvinists. The noble zeal of this type of ethics is gradually finding expression in a less legalistic conception.

**THE ANGLICAN CONCEPTION OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS.**—The Reformation in England was political rather than primarily religious. It meant in the first instance the elimination of Roman control over English affairs. It substituted the king for the pope as the religious head. The Catholic ideal was softened into the conception of a church-directed culture—the directing church being, of course, the Anglican body. Christian ethics was conceived, not as a matter of personal consecration mainly (Lutheranism) or as the attempt to enforce biblical precepts by law (Calvinism), but rather as the promotion of the entire national culture under the inspiration and direction of the Anglican church.

This attitude has meant, on the one hand, a remarkably free creative attitude toward the outstanding social problems and, on the other hand, a perplexing tenacity in the matter of valuing church organization and authority above all else. Almost any desirable moral reform can win Anglican support provided it can be subsumed under the ideal of a church-inspired culture. At the same time the Anglican church and the Protestant Episcopal church in the United States have produced more than their share of leaders in professional social work, as well as in social service under church auspices.

**THE PROBLEM FOR MODERN PROTESTANT ETHICS.**—In the course of Protestant history none of the foregoing solutions has proved entirely satisfactory. All have preserved the medieval conception of the world as a "Christendom" and assumed that we could count on "Christian rulers," "Christian nations," established churches, and the like. But in our modern democratic life Jews and non-Christians have equal political rights with Christians, and the democratic spirit calls for persuasion rather than control. Laws must be framed so as to protect dissenters from ecclesiastical pressure as well as to secure the churches in their rights. Protestantism is, therefore, feeling its way into an adequate formulation of the duties of a Christian in an age when overhead control by Christian authority is impracticable and yet when the need for Christian influence in the social order is keenly felt.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did the repudiation of the authority of the Catholic church create a new problem in Christian ethics? What moral interpretation does the Catholic church place on schism or heresy? Was Luther a heretic? How could Luther justify his position? Did the repudiation of the authority of the Catholic church have any unfortunate consequences? When the confessional was abolished, was it easy for a Christian to know just what was necessary to a Christian life?
2. How did Luther's doctrine of salvation by grace alone free men from the dominion of the Catholic church?
3. Why does a Christian perform good works, according to Luther? What kind of a religious experience does this conception presuppose? Does everyone have this kind of an experience? What is the Catholic judgment on Luther's theory of morality?
4. How did Luther expect Christians to find out what they ought to do? Compare his plan with that of Catholicism. How did Luther's position enable him to abolish such Catholic practices as fasting, saint-worship, penance, and the like? Compare Luther's principle of morality with that of Jesus. Can love be depended upon always to suggest the right thing? Does a loving mother ever "spoil" her child? Might Christian love be sentimental rather than wise?
5. Does an "orthodox" man usually feel morally superior to a man who holds "unorthodox" views? Does he feel that he has a right to condemn such persons? What gives him the right to do so? Does orthodoxy furnish any temptation to become "self-righteous"?
6. How may the Christian know what he ought to do, according to Calvinism? Compare this with the Lutheran conception; with the Catholic conception. Did Calvinism attempt to interfere in politics? Name some historical instances. Lutheranism adopted the motto, *Cuius regio ejus religio* ("The religion of the

ruler must be the religion of the people"). Contrast this principle with the attitude of John Knox who refused to submit to the religious ideas of his sovereign, Mary, Queen of Scots. What gave a Calvinist a right to oppose a ruler?

7. What is a theocracy? How did Calvinism attempt to maintain a theocracy? Why were Calvinists more strict about Sabbath-keeping than either Catholics or Lutherans?
8. Why is there such a general dislike of a "Puritan"? How do you account for the change of sentiment since the early days of New England history? State what seem to you to be the points of strength and the points of weakness in the ideal of a biblical theocracy.
9. How is the Christian to find out what he ought to do, according to Anglicanism? Compare this program with Calvinism; with Lutheranism; with Roman Catholicism.
10. Can we assume today that all citizens will be Christians? Have non-Christians rights which must be respected? Do you think that the disestablishment of the church is a moral advantage? How do you think a patriotic Jew feels when he hears the United States described as a "Christian nation"? Why cannot a nation like the United States officially sanction some specific "Christian" program? How does the establishment of a secular state affect the practicability of early Protestant ethical ideals?

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## CHAPTER VII

### CHRISTIAN ETHICS AS A QUEST FOR THE GOOD

**T**HREE are two essential questions which a moral person must always ask. One of these is: What is the highest good? It is extremely important to keep asking this question. The dogmatic mind may accept some conventional definition of the good and forget to ask whether the assumed highest good is really the highest. In particular we need to realize that, when once a given doctrine of the good has been declared to be the will of God, men do not feel free to criticize it. Indeed, men have sometimes believed themselves to be obeying the will of God when they had actually identified a very faulty idea of their own with the divine will.

But there is a second question equally important. It is this: Am I willing to devote myself to the highest good? To know the better but to choose the worse is no uncommon experience. Christianity has always laid primary stress upon the consecration of the individual to the will of God. One may have the attitude of moral devotion even while he is uncertain as to what the highest good is. One may be dedicated to duty without knowing precisely where duty will lead him. When this spirit of Christian devotion is linked to a dog-

matic definition of the highest good, it may lead to ruthless fanaticism, if the highest good be wrongly defined. But when joined with the open-minded quest for the truth, it is an almost irresistible constructive power.

**THE NEED OF THE SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS.**—Only as competent observation and experimentation aid moral insight, can we really know what is the highest good. Many moral precepts which come down to us in tradition were based on an imperfect knowledge. Only three or four centuries ago Christians believed that they ought to employ physical torture, if necessary, to induce a man to renounce a "false" belief. Happily, we have learned better. The story of the behavior of Christian people at the time of the panic over witches in Salem is almost incredible today. In these and in numberless other cases it is imperative that the facts should be accurately known if men are really to promote the highest good. Important as it is for the Christian to seek the will of God, it is equally important for him to realize that a correct understanding of all the facts is a help toward this end, and this understanding cannot be attained without employing the best methods of inquiry as to what is good.

**THERE IS NO SHORT AND EASY WAY OF DETERMINING MORAL CONDUCT.**—Anyone on reflection discovers instances in which he feels that he has not been justly treated. This often occurs when the intentions of others are good. The parent who has no inner feeling for the experiences of a child may with the best of intentions so behave as to forfeit the moral approval of

the child. The employer of labor, facing the complex situation due to industrial competition, on the one hand, and the demands of labor organizations, on the other, has no easy task to discover what is morally required of him.

It is to be feared that our usual training in Christian ethics has not made us aware of the serious character of the quest for the good life. We too easily assume that in the Bible, or at least in the teachings of Jesus, we have a ready-made code applicable to any and all circumstances. Many good Christian people are not aware that we simply do not know enough about some of the complicated questions of our day to be able to achieve moral certainty. We are constantly being urged to introduce "Christian principles" into our relationships with men; but those relationships are often so indefinite or so remote that we cannot even think seriously about them. One of the great defects in our Christian morality is the fact that it has been clearly worked out in only a very small territory of life.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF AN ACQUAINTANCE WITH FACTS.**—True wisdom comes, not from repeating principles and formulas which we have learned from some book or some master, but from a firsthand knowledge of the facts. It is comparatively easy to say that we ought to relieve destitution. But when a beggar on the street asks for money, the chances are that an unquestioning response to his request will simply reinforce his demoralization. It is not easy to know what the particular circumstances require in such a case. Moreover, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the ordinary man to

find out what he needs to know. In most large cities there usually exists a public welfare department, which is equipped to furnish reliable information. The Christian who wishes to help the unfortunate must avail himself of those organized forms of exact knowledge which modern society has created. One of the greatest needs today is a reliable means of finding out the facts. The sentiment of Christian people is an enormous moral force. If it could always be accompanied by knowledge it would determine the conduct of affairs in many instances. But when such a crisis as a bitterly fought strike occurs, Christians generally are not sufficiently well informed to be sure precisely what the application of Christian principles would require. There is altogether too much vague religious talk about the power of Christianity to solve all moral problems. But Christian solutions must be worked out by Christian people; and no one can "solve" a problem unless he knows exactly what difficulties must be overcome and how they may best be effectually treated. The importance of precise knowledge of facts cannot be overemphasized.

**THE IMPORTANCE OF A CHRISTIAN VALUATION OF FACTS.**—Mere knowledge of facts does not necessarily lead to moral action. It may end in tables of formal statistics. It may even beget a fatalistic way of inferring from the constancy of statistical information the conclusion that human nature is so predetermined that there is no possibility of changing it. It is here that Christian experience and training render supremely important service. The Christian has learned through

his relationship to Jesus and through his training in the church to love generous and humane behavior. Anything that prevents such behavior he hates. If scientific investigation discloses the cause of an evil, the Christian enters on a campaign against that cause. Important as it is that we should have exact scientific knowledge concerning human life, it is even more important that there should be the purpose to use such knowledge in order that men may lead better lives.

**CHRISTIAN ETHICS AS A NEVER CEASING QUEST FOR THE GOOD.**—The moral education of humanity is never finished. During the long and slow course of human history, mankind has been constantly learning. The moral ideals of one age are not good enough in all respects for a succeeding age. Formal systems serve a useful purpose in conserving and organizing whatever knowledge has been attained at the time of the system. But no system can include all the varied needs of man in his changeful history. The true moral life is in constant poise, ready not only to apply the familiar precepts but also to discover and to meet new needs. Christian ethics, in so far as it embodies the spirit of Jesus, will be a creative attitude of moral eagerness rather than complacent conformity to a system. If duty be portrayed as that of moral exploration, we may uncover many an opportunity which would never have presented itself to us without the creative insight due to the spirit of moral quest.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Are you sure that your present convictions ought all to be held? How can one find out what the highest good really is? Do you think that Christians are critical enough of their own beliefs? Does mere knowledge of the right guarantee right action? Theodore Roosevelt once characterized certain people as "parlor reformers." He referred to people who listen to "up-lifting" lectures and feel that by merely listening and approving they have taken a stand for morality. What moral defect do you see in a parlor reformer?
2. What is the scientific spirit? Are moral precepts sometimes formulated on the basis of imperfect knowledge? Can you name any instance? As you recall your Christian training, do you feel that enough stress was laid on the necessity of critical questioning?
3. How do you think of Christian morality: as obedience or as a quest for the good? Are the two incompatible? How is a Christian parent to know how to deal with a "difficult" child? How can a Christian employer know what wages he ought to pay? Could he find out by reading his Bible?
4. Have you ever had a beggar ask you for money? What did you do? Are you sure that you did your Christian duty? Ought a Christian to know about the Public Welfare Department in his town? Why? How can a Christian determine which party he ought to support in an election? Do Christians usually have the information which they need in such cases? Could they get it by reading the Bible? How could they get it?
5. What is meant by a Christian valuation of facts? What is the difference between an accurate knowledge of the facts concerning intemperance and a Christian valuation of these facts? Does a liquor-seller know the facts? How does his valuation differ from that of a Christian?

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SOME FACTS OF THE MORAL LIFE

IT IS easy to turn moral thinking into a kind of pleasant daydreaming. Many a man wants emotionally to be pure or generous but fails to realize his desire because of difficulties which he does not seriously undertake to meet and of which he may not be intelligently aware. Good resolutions are notoriously short lived. The general purpose must be upheld by a system of more specific purposes and procedures, just as the desire to build a house or a ship must be implemented by a multitude of detailed acts worked into a plan and carried out in accordance with that plan. The carrying-out of each particular act forwards the general purpose, and neglect or failure at particular points hampers the purpose as a whole. So character and personality are built up in terms of responsibility, of resourcefulness, of loyalty to the general interest, and of definite accomplishment of things worth doing. In a sense an important part of what a person is may be inferred from what he does, and the doing is an aid to the being. A good person is one who by intention and by practice does right things, and the sincere doing of helpful things aids in the building of good character. There are certain fundamental facts in the very structure of our daily existence which must be

squarely faced if a moral resolve is to be anything more than a wistful gesture.

**WHAT IS HUMAN NATURE?**—Although human nature has sometimes been discussed in vague and general terms, we must recognize that it is impossible to know human nature apart from behavior and that the nature of man is in the long run indicated by the kind of life he lives. This is never all bad or, certainly, all good; but, although man makes mistakes and commits the gravest and most outrageous evils, there seems always an element in man that revolts against the evil and longs for the good. Man has as genuine an interest in improving his behavior as he has in improving his inventions and devices, although the latter is an incomparably simpler matter. Whatever "original" human nature might be, the nature that we can study is shaped by definite patterns of living which operate through the home and then through a civilization as a whole. Human nature starts with babies. Each one is born with certain definite aptitudes which have been inherited. But this inheritance is widely varied among men. Moreover, from the day of birth the babe is subjected to a process of education which stimulates and develops certain kinds of behavior. It is perfectly "natural" for a boy with good heredity and the influence of a refined home to have refined tastes. It is equally natural for the boy with an unfortunate inheritance who is thrown with vicious companions to have depraved tastes. It is far more profitable to try to understand the specific facts in the case of each individual than to generalize about "human nature."

**HUMAN NATURE IS PLASTIC.**—The most important aspect of human life is the large place which education has in shaping conduct. Human nature is such that an individual or a nation may be molded on a democratic, a totalitarian, or some other pattern and life may be guided into Christian ways or pagan ones in accordance with the influences which are brought to bear upon developing persons. There are, indeed, certain fundamental impulses, such as the need for food, the sex interest, fear, anger, curiosity, and the like; but all these can be trained in specific ways and can be controlled by moral ideals. Christian doctrine and modern psychology agree that a man need not remain completely bound by his undeveloped natural inheritance. Under the suggestions which come from social contacts the mind of each individual is being constantly altered. Christian ethics should take account of the factors which enter into the remaking of human nature and should set forth the duty of using all proper means for the securing of a Christian character.

**WHAT IS CONSCIENCE?**—The word “conscience” needs careful definition. Everybody knows by experience the strong feeling that one “ought” to do certain things. But this feeling is often interpreted in so mysterious a fashion that its relation to moral behavior is not always clear. We say that a man ought always to follow his conscience. Yet we find some men who conscientiously advocate fads or prejudices plainly harmful. If we recognize the fact that conscience, like any other human capacity, is a matter of growth and education, we shall be saved from much perplexity.

How CONSCIENCE IS DEVELOPED.—A little observation will show that conscience is the result of education, as truly as is the ability to read and write. There is, of course, a native impulse which is trained into conscientious action, just as there is a native ability which is directed into the capacity to read. But the particular direction which this original impulse to activity takes is due largely to the social experience of early years. An individual in infancy can be trained to speak and read Chinese as readily as English or any other language, and the ideas which he has will be molded by the language and culture in which he comes up, at the same time that they are affected by his personal experiences. Somewhat similarly the specific reactions of any person's conscience are influenced by the standards of conduct with which he is familiar. The child from the first is made to feel that certain acts are admirable, while others are "naughty." Emotions are trained to approve some things and to disapprove others. Wherever the parents have strong feelings on a given subject, the children by social sympathy share those feelings. The child is almost always loyal to the ideals or the prejudices which prevail in the home. It is only when he comes into contact with other ideas or standards and begins to reason for himself that any distinction is made between what he has been taught to respect and what is actually good.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND MORAL JUDGMENT.—It will make the nature of moral choice clearer, if we distinguish between two aspects of moral experience which are often confused, both popularly being called

“conscience.” The first aspect may be called “conscientiousness.” It is an attitude of moral loyalty. The conscientious man pledges himself to decide always in favor of what is morally better, no matter whether it inconveniences him or not. This attitude is the best possible preparation for moral thoughtfulness. But the purpose to do right does not necessarily carry with it any special insight as to what the right is, any more than a determination to learn a language guarantees that one will always speak without error.

The second factor in morality is good moral judgment. If a conscientious person is ignorant or prejudiced, his very conscientiousness may stand in the way of the attainment of true wisdom. Moral judgment, like judgment in any realm of life, comes only through a wide experience in which different possibilities are carefully weighed. It is a mistake to suppose that “conscience” can supply intuitive knowledge. The Christian’s conscience does not furnish him automatically with good judgment when the necessity for a moral choice confronts him; but it does furnish an incentive toward the acquirement of such knowledge as is indispensable for a wise choice.

**THE SOCIAL CHARACTER OF CONSCIENCE.**—In a sense conscience already exists before the individual acquires a conscience of his own. The society into which he is born has its generally accepted ideals and its strong loyalties. It is very difficult for the individual to dissent from these current judgments. The American boy takes pride in characteristic American attitudes so naturally and so instinctively that it seems incredible

to him that boys in other lands can be really loyal to a king or a dictator. Our moral life grows out of our sharing of the social conscience which we find already existing. Even when the individual dissents from conventionally accepted standards, his dissent is nonetheless conditioned by the social conscience. He is much more likely to win adherents to his cause if he can represent it as an improved form of what is already loved than he would be if he assumed an attitude of repudiation.

**THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIENCE.**—For centuries Christian men and women have faced the problems of life and have come to certain conclusions concerning what is required of a disciple of Jesus. There is thus a Christian conscience which has laid down definite principles of action in many realms of life. The individual acquires a Christian conscience exactly as he acquires his moral convictions in the realm of politics or of any organized interest. He shares the conversation and the activities of Christian people. If this experience comes to him in connection with persons whom he loves and with whom he identifies himself, he takes over their values and their attitudes as his own and inwardly feels the claim of these values upon him. If, however, Christian ideas are presented to him by persons who are emotionally indifferent to him, although they have prestige and authority, the individual may give only mental allegiance and lip service to these authoritative statements. Christian standards do not become a part of his inner self. And if things that are called right and Christian are presented by people whom he dislikes or by people who are associated with unhappiness or fear

in his life rather than with love, trust, and happiness, he is almost certain to experience an element of inner rebellion growing out of his unhappy emotional conditioning. Thus he may become an individual who likes to flout any standards which are presented to him. This indicates that something more is needed than strict teaching to create an effective Christian conscience. The Christian conscience and the Christian spirit develop naturally when moral education is carried on in an atmosphere of love. When the individual attains a personal religious experience he assumes a more definite responsibility for maintaining Christian ideals. It would be a mistake to suppose that he must create out of his personal experience the content of his Christian convictions. These are to a large extent already socially provided.

This social Christian conscience, like the conscience of the individual, is not fixed and infallible. It has developed through a varied history. It is always capable of being educated. When public policies are decided by popular opinion, the importance of a strong Christian conscience is obvious. The peculiar danger is that this conscience may be very sensitive concerning matters of ecclesiastical regularity or established thinking and relatively ineffective in reference to new issues or to matters which, although intrinsically wrong in their effects upon life, have long been condoned by the conscience of the group. Without qualms men have fought for shady causes, persecuted the just, tyrannized over the minds of others, and taken an unjust share of the world's wealth.

THE QUESTION OF FREEDOM OF THE WILL.—Treatises on ethics formerly devoted much attention to this question. But the discussions presupposed the existence of a distinct entity or “faculty” called the “will.” We have now come to see that human activity involves many factors. The same person may at one time be kindly and at another time be morose. What causes the difference in his conduct at the two times? A variety of answers may be given. His morose conduct may be due to an attack of indigestion. Or he may have suffered a humiliating experience of some kind. Or he may be tired out. We never explain the reason for a man’s conduct in terms of an isolated will. The practical question for ethics, therefore, is not as to the existence of a metaphysically free will. It is rather an empirical inquiry into the conditions of human behavior.

THE PRACTICAL MEANING OF FREEDOM.—Practically, freedom means the ability of a man to make a deliberate choice when confronted with two or more possible courses of action. It means that he can give good reasons why he chose the course which he took. He did not act automatically. He made sure that his action should express what he really thought to be best. Freedom thus practically means the ability to stop and deliberate before committing one’s self to any particular activity. It means the capacity to bring to attention through the use of memory and imagination other satisfactions besides the one suggested by the accidental environment in which one stands.

THE CONDITIONS OF SUCH FREEDOM.—When viewed

in this practical way, certain necessary conditions of freedom appear.

1. *A healthy physical and mental life.*—If a person is suffering intense pain, his thinking is inevitably held in subjection to this imperative physical need. If he is tired out, he has not the vigor demanded for serious thinking. He will almost inevitably do the easiest thing. Disease which saps one's strength, mental habits which prevent serious thinking, preoccupation with fads or prejudices—all are conditions which limit the capacity of a person to consider alternate possibilities of action. If there exist such obstacles to freedom, they must be removed as the first step toward a moral life.

2. *A broad range of interests.*—If, in a crisis, I can think of only one thing to do, I am not free in my action. I simply have to do the thing which is in my mind. The larger the number of alternate courses which I can imagine, the greater my freedom. Many a man sinks into an easy acquiescence with debasing habits simply because he does not know of any other way of finding satisfaction. If, when I meet opposition, I can think of no possible attitude save that of hostility, I shall never avail myself of the "soft answer that turneth away wrath" or labor to substitute methods of reasonable arbitration for the employment of force in cases of dispute.

This condition of freedom is especially important in dealing with temptation. If, when the allurement of some harmful thing presents itself to me, I am unable to think of any alternative which would bring satisfaction, I am helpless in the power of the temptation. The

mere longing for gratification will wear out my protests. Tactful parents and teachers have long since found out that the surest way of preventing a child from indulging its momentary desires is to divert the attention of the child to something else. We escape from the power of temptation by turning attention to something more worthy rather than by directly fighting the longing. The supreme importance of a broad enough range of interests to permit such substitution is evident.

3. *A capacity for intelligent valuation.*—One must have ability to bring his set of values to bear upon particular situations and to decide each issue in allegiance to his values. If one is a creature of impulse at any particular moment and can bring the power of his values into the scene only after he has acted on his impulses, then the individual has a long distance to go to gain real freedom of will, which can exist fully only when one is so trained that his impulses are usually right. The capacity for making good moral valuations is attained exactly as is good taste in art or in literature. The amateur puts himself under the influence of those who are able to discern the difference between what is good and what is trivial or debasing. The education thus received is quite as much a matter of sharing the feeling of our masters as it is a matter of technical criticism. In Christian ethics the method of achieving an independent judgment is usually that of reading the Bible and sharing the ideals there presented. Most important is an acquaintance with Jesus so intimate that we may be led to love what he loved. The Christian may

gradually come to have "the mind of Christ," so that his judgment in any case will be genuinely Christian. Such a method of moral valuation leaves the Christian free from the cramping conventionalism of a stereotyped code and enables him to assume a creative attitude toward the problems of life.

4. *A social situation which gives some scope for action.*—When life is unduly regimented or behavior predetermined so that any deviation from customary ways is looked upon with disapproval or is ruthlessly suppressed, freedom of will is frustrated in large degree, just as freedom of invention or freedom of scientific discovery would be hampered if all things new were rejected in advance. Our society has great facility in accepting new devices and new discoveries but less acumen in applying the principles of the good life to all the ways and conditions of men. Individuals of ethical vigor have often suffered under the pressure of a backward-looking group mind. To be sure, a prophet may hold to his conception of truth even if he is stoned for it, yet the good which he wills for the group is held back by their opposition. The fullest freedom of will for all persons demands a high degree of mutual understanding and of co-operation in seeking the good.

5. *Well-chosen and commanding goals.*—Vigor of will and, by the same token, complete freedom are dependent upon having discerned and chosen commanding goals for our lives. Any objective which calls mightily upon us strengthens our will for its accomplishment. It is possible to have in the moral realm an unswerving loyalty to high goals toward which all the

resources of our being are organized, just as in the biological realm nature itself provides an unshakable energy of parental determination to protect and care for offspring. By a strange paradox our wills achieve the greatest freedom to carry out our purposes in the presence of opposition when some commanding ideal has stirred our deepest loyalties.

A person does not gain freedom of will by taking a dilettante attitude that all choices are equally good or by feeling as free to choose wrong goals as to choose right ones. Sooner or later the universe defeats wrong choices and brings moral feebleness to persons who have no commanding purposes. Whole-hearted dedication of one's self to knowing the truth and to serving the good is one of the greatest means of inner freedom. Along such lines we feel that we are in league with the universe and that nothing can ultimately defeat us.

**WHAT IS INVOLVED IN MORAL CHOICE?**—In the endeavor to simplify the conception of morality, choice is often depicted as if it were an arbitrary selection of one of two alternatives and the rejection of the other. As a matter of fact, the process is seldom so simple. We are confronted with a complex situation in which several desirable things make their appeal. What we actually try to do is to secure for ourselves as large a number of good things as possible. While we may at any given moment decide to work rather than to play, we usually also determine to make a place for play somewhere in our program. The growth of the moral life is not so much a series of exclusive choices as it is an ordering of life so as to make room for all desirable good things.

Even when two alternatives seem mutually exclusive, the ingenuity of creative freedom is often such as to work out an adjustment in which something of both alternatives is retained. Every choice is an experiment from which we learn better how to choose wisely the next time. Often moral issues are not clear cut. We have to choose the course which at the time seems to be best. But we cannot be sure it is best until we see how the choice turns out. A so-called "conflict of duties" is, when carefully analyzed, only a wealth of moral opportunities presented to a person who is not in a position to make use of them all. Alternatives are frequently set before us by zealous partisans which are not necessary alternatives at all. Sometimes a greater freedom in the exercise of moral judgment resulting from a better-developed imagination will suggest ways of readjustment which will preserve allegiance to both possibilities. For example, when a person discovers that the first chapters of Genesis are not literally in accord with modern science, he is not compelled either to accept the Bible as infallible or to throw it all away. The better moral course is to readjust one's conceptions in accordance with the facts so that one can be loyal both to the Bible and to the requirements of scientific honesty.

**MORAL RESPONSIBILITY.**—The word "responsibility" indicates that a person is capable of making some sort of response to moral demands. He may be held accountable for his actions. We do not consider a person responsible if we are convinced that he cannot give that rational consideration to his conduct which we

have already discussed as the essence of freedom. The insane person, the inexperienced child, the man suffering some overwhelming agony, are instances of people incapable of the deliberation which we expect in morally free persons. We should not think of asking any of these to assume an important responsibility. But we do demand that persons in normal circumstances shall be ready to give an account of their deeds in terms of moral decision. Christian doctrine has expressed this fact of moral responsibility dramatically in its doctrine that every individual must meet God face to face and give account of his deeds. The habit of daily confession in prayer, if the confession be explicit and not a mere form of words, is a powerful religious means of cultivating a constant sense of responsibility.

**RESPONSIBILITY IN RELATION TO THE SOCIAL CONSCIENCE.**—Our earliest and our most constant experiences of responsibility are called forth by the demands of the social conscience. We are expected by parents, teachers, schoolmates, friends, to live up to the standards already accepted by the social group. The sense of responsibility is always most highly developed in such social relations. It is difficult to feel any profound moral obligation toward members of an alien or hostile group. It is here that zealous reformers often go astray. The new responsibility is often presented in terms of a hostile criticism of existing loyalties and thus fails to engage a sympathetic hearing. The new loyalty should always include all that is worthy in the old. The discovery of responsibilities toward new groups does not

release one from his responsibility toward the old. The moral task is to bring about a co-ordination of different responsibilities. This involves a criticism of existing social demands in so far as these are plainly inadequate.

**THE CHRISTIAN TEST OF RESPONSIBILITY.**—The Christian is accountable to God. He is responsible for maintaining the kind of life which is worthy of a disciple of Jesus. The Christian, therefore, can never stop with any conventionally accepted standard of responsibility. He must strive to be “perfect even as [his] Father in heaven is perfect.” The Christian’s good will must be as universal as that of God. He must so enlarge the boundaries of his good intentions as to embrace all human relationships. Christianity reaffirms the responsibility which men owe to family, to personal friends, to country, to vocational associates; but it insists that this responsibility shall be so broadened as to eliminate petty provincialism. One who is willing to be judged by God must show a sense of moral obligation to all of God’s children.<sup>1</sup>

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. “We think that by feeling strongly enough about something, by wishing hard enough, we can get a desirable result, such as virtuous execution of a good resolve, or peace among nations, or good will in industry.” Is this a common fault with well-intentioned people?
2. “To Aristotle slavery was rooted in aboriginal human nature.” Was Aristotle right? How do you know whether he was right

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 5:43-48.

or not? Is craving for intoxicants "natural"? What kinds of satisfaction do you "naturally" enjoy? Does your neighbor "naturally" enjoy the same satisfactions? Can you tell whether your present tastes are due to training or to your original "nature"?

3. "You can't change human nature." Do you agree with this statement? In carrying on wars peace-loving and generous boys are trained to kill their fellow-men. Is their "nature" changed? Is it changed back again after war? What brings about the changes in both cases? Is race prejudice "natural"? Can it be intensified by propaganda? Can it be overcome by education?
4. Do conscientious people ever do wrong? "The plastic character of conscience is shown by the ease with which a person may be led to accept an irrational content as readily as one that serves the true ends of life. The most emphatic utterances of conscience in a child may, by the force of training, be connected with purely arbitrary and artificial principles." Can you recall any matters about which you were very scrupulous as a child but which you have since come to consider of slight importance? Why did you feel as you did? Why have you changed your attitude?
5. Are "conscientious objectors," who refuse to take part in war, any more conscientious than Christians who take part? How do you account for such differences of judgment among conscientious people? How may one acquire good moral judgment?
6. What is meant by a "social conscience"? A century or more ago men felt that they were in duty bound to fight duels under certain conditions. Ought Alexander Hamilton to have refused to fight a duel with Aaron Burr? Why did he feel that he ought to accept the challenge?
7. What is a "Christian conscience"? How does it differ from the conscience of a Mohammedan? How may one acquire a Christian conscience? Is a Christian conscience infallible?

8. We often ask a person, "What made you do that?" Would we be satisfied if he answered that he just willed it? Why are you not free to choose the best when you are tired out? How free is a prejudiced man? How free is an ignorant man? Can temptation be successfully resisted by simply willing not to yield?
9. In questions involving moral decision are all the moral considerations usually on one side; or are there "two sides to every question"? Do we always choose one alternative to the entire exclusion of the other? Suppose a person who sings poorly asks you what you think of her singing; do you set the alternative: either truthfulness involving courtesy or courtesy involving untruthfulness? Or do you try to be *both* truthful *and* courteous? If so, do you find some sort of compromise? Is such a compromise morally defensible?
10. What is meant by moral responsibility? Do we hold a man responsible for deliberately killing another man in time of peace? Do we hold him equally responsible for the act in time of war? Why do we make the distinction? "War is murder." Does this express the exact truth? How would you revise the statement?

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## CHAPTER IX

### WHY DO PEOPLE DO WRONG?

THE emphasis laid upon sin by Christian preachers and teachers is justified if we observe human life closely. The newspaper lays before us daily a sordid and terrible story of lust, greed, ruthless ambition, graft, commercialized vice, dishonesty, warfare, and other wrongs. These things go on in spite of the admirable theoretical discussions of moral problems. All the books on ethics in the world will not save men if their inner purposes are not right.

WHAT Is SIN?—Strictly speaking there is no such thing as “sin” apart from persons who are guilty of sinning. Moreover, to call a man a sinner does not tell us much about him. It leaves us in the dark as to just what his offense is. Even if we get a man to repent of sin in general, he may never have his attention called to some particular habit which he ought to correct. Through long centuries of theological discussion the word “sin” has been overloaded with speculation until it is in danger of becoming a mere abstract term.

A common meaning of the New Testament word for sin is “to miss the mark.” Confronted by a situation in which we should do a right thing and do it well and should act in a spirit of love, we do a wrong thing or do badly something which, if done well, would be a val-

able way of meeting the situation. When we act in a spirit of hatred, prejudice, selfishness, or moral indifference we miss the mark of worthy action. A set of habits and attitudes which makes it likely that we shall miss the mark of right and helpful action goes far toward describing a state of sin.

**WHY DO PEOPLE DO WRONG?**—For the purposes of practical Christian living, it is much more important to ask specifically in each case of wrongdoing just what it was that led the person into sin than it is to theorize about sin in general. When once we realize the factors which enter into human conduct and see the various and subtle forces which prevent us from living at our best, we shall be in a position to plan more definitely for the elimination or counteracting of the immediate causes of our failures.

**MERE GOOD INTENTIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH.**—The old proverb says that “the road to hell is paved with good intentions.” A common way of tolerantly characterizing a man’s failure to accomplish any good is to say that “he meant well.” Jane Addams told of a neighborly woman in the foreign section of Chicago who offered to help a sick baby next door by giving it whiskey or gin. Her intentions were good; but what about the baby? The fanatic who urges some fad without any adequate knowledge of the real implication of what he indorses is likely to lead people astray. It is not enough to have a good purpose. One must also have good sense. Does not Christian aspiration often begin and end with a generalized glow of good feeling? Does the Christian deliberately undertake to discover

just how this mystical exaltation can be definitely connected with the concrete tasks of his daily life? Jesus warned his disciples that citizenship in the Kingdom was not to be secured by fervently proclaiming "Lord! Lord!" Adequate knowledge of the conditions of moral living is as essential as is the purpose to live rightly.

**THE DISCOVERY OF OUR MORAL FAILURES.**—Paradoxically enough it is usually the case that those who are most conscious of their sinfulness are those who have taken most seriously the obligations of the Christian life. Paul, Augustine, John Wesley—to name three outstanding Christian leaders—were all acutely conscious of their sinfulness. It is only the easy-going Christian who is satisfied with his behavior. The man who is genuinely measuring his life by the standards of Jesus makes appalling discoveries. There is a real truth in the doctrine of original sin. Much of the wrongdoing in which we are engaged is due not so much to perverted intention on our part as it is to circumstances which are permitted to determine our behavior. A survey of some of these contributing causes of wrongdoing will help us to deal more effectively with the fact of sin.

**FAILURE DUE TO UNFORTUNATE TRAINING.**—We must recognize that some people are trained in evil ways and distorted by an unfavorable environment and are therefore handicapped in any effort to achieve the good life. There are others who are warped because their moral training has been such that they react against the harshness or the dulness of it. Then they do the opposite by way of seeking a new thrill of freedom. A high-school girl said: "What I want to do

my parents forbid, and what they want me to do doesn't interest me."<sup>1</sup> Although this sort of reaction against training is natural, the results are likely to be unfortunate. If a person has been under the influence of those who were attractive to him but whose ways were evil, he will follow their ways because they seem more appealing. While it is only the good that is ultimately attractive, yet there are factors of training which may make the evil seem alluring and the good unexciting. Therefore, those who have an influence over others must present the good in its attractiveness and make it more appealing than the evil.

**FAILURE BECAUSE OF INEXPERIENCE.**—There is no way in which the experience of one generation may be transmitted to the next *as experience*. A certain amount of guidance may be expressed in rules and maxims drawn from the experience of the race and in attitudes which the child takes over from those who shape his life. But morality depends on the feeling of moral distinctions. Often we acquire the capacity to feel such distinctions only after we have already formed habits which we regret. The person who assumes a new responsibility for which he is ill prepared is likely to make serious mistakes. A primary moral duty is the safeguarding of the inexperienced as far as possible by enabling them to acquire the necessary experience in wholesome ways rather than through the disaster of humiliating mistakes. The "old-fashioned" method of training by requiring implicit obedience to precepts

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Leland Foster Wood, *Making a Home: A Study of Youth, Courtship, and Marriage* (Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1938), p. 13.

arbitrarily administered is being largely supplanted today by the better method of initiating the child into a richer experience in sympathetic association with his elders.

**FAILURE DUE TO IGNORANCE.**—Terrible is the remorse for avoidable evil done through ignorance. The boy who "didn't know that the gun was loaded" may just as surely kill a companion as if he had deliberately murdered him. The physician who does not know enough to give an accurate diagnosis may leave the patient as badly off as if he had been guilty of neglect. While we cannot blame a man for unavoidable ignorance, we do recognize the harm which results from ignorance. It is the duty of every morally earnest man to make himself as wise as possible. Especially in the leaders of religious life is ignorance a moral defect which ought not to be tolerated. Scientific research and historical investigation today make available for us knowledge which previous generations could not possess. To fail to incorporate such knowledge into the equipment of a Christian leader is to defraud those who depend on him for guidance.

**FAILURE THROUGH LACK OF SELF-CONTROL.**—We are familiar with the common sins due to uncontrolled impulse. Anger, jealousy, fear, lust, avarice, cowardice, and the like are easily identified. But it is difficult for an individual to judge accurately the moral bearings of behavior which gives to him an emotional satisfaction. It is easy to explain such behavior in terms flattering to our self-esteem. Morality consists in subjecting the natural impulses to a critical scrutiny so

that a reasonable program for life shall take the place of mere impulsive activity. The influence of Christian training is sufficient to call our attention to many of these traits. But modern psychology has rendered a great service in making us acquainted with certain repressed and often unnoticed factors in our consciousness. Whenever any experience evokes a strong emotion, it leaves in the pathways of our mental processes an emotional result which makes itself felt whenever the circumstances connected with the original experience are repeated. There are various "complexes" which can be diagnosed by a skilled psychiatrist and which will explain many instances of baffling behavior. A humiliating experience may induce a habit of avoiding certain contacts and thus create a refusal frankly to face one's total environment. Evasions of various sorts leave their mark on character. In some cases the inner conflict results in serious nervous instability, carrying with it the inability to engage confidently in morally worthy enterprises. Self-control is possible only if the education and the social contacts of a person have been such as to bring out a sense of confidence in his ability to meet responsibilities in a worthy fashion.

**FAILURE DUE TO PHYSICAL CONDITIONS.**—Our behavior is dependent not only upon our purposes but also upon our physical condition. Our plans can be carried out only as the body shall serve as the agent of our resolves. Injury to the brain causes abnormal behavior. A person suffering pain cannot be expected to give his attention to anything requiring calm and careful thought. Adenoids obstructing the breathing pas-

sages may prevent a child from obtaining the purifying oxygen needed to maintain health and the mental poise which health gives. Fatigue makes us easily irritable, readily discouraged. The close relationship between bodily health and spiritual wholesomeness is not always realized. As a part of the equipment for a Christian life we must appreciate the adequately nourished body and the good functioning of all the physical organs. In the crowded life of our cities this means attention to public sanitation, the problem of good housing, and the control of disease. There is thus need of social ethics in addition to the ethics of individual living.

**FAILURE DUE TO SOCIAL CONDITIONS.**—Our conceptions of morality are inevitably derived from the social tradition in which we are educated. Our behavior ordinarily conforms to the standards approved by the people whom we trust and admire. Some of the most difficult moral problems confronting us today are set by the social tradition which we inherit and from which it is very hard to break away. Race prejudice stands in the way of Christian brotherhood. Anyone who attempts to break down the barriers insisted upon by tradition is sure to feel the weight of social disapproval. War is kept before the imagination of men largely by inherited sentiments of national loyalty nourished on the glorification of past wars. "In wine-drinking countries wine is praised in poetry and song. . . . Until very recent years a total abstainer in middle class European society was regarded with disquietude of mind and social impatience, like a person

advocating force revolution or political assassination.” We are educated by assimilating the customs of the society into which we are born. Thus, even when we dedicate ourselves to what seems to be right, we may sometimes discover ourselves to be facing in the wrong direction.

**THE MORAL LIFE AS A STRUGGLE AGAINST SIN.**— Such a survey of the influences which lead to moral failure makes it clear that the idea of original sin contains a real truth. We all know the humiliating experience of finding that high ideals are thwarted by forces which are stronger than a good intention. There sometimes seems to be an almost diabolical irony in the emergence of apparently trivial matters which upset moral equilibrium and deliver a person over to emotions and motives of which he is later ashamed. The language of Christian devotion involves almost wearisome repetitions of confession of sin. But the experience of a morally earnest person confirms this emphasis. A frank recognition of the causes for moral failure reveals the fact that right living is no easy matter. The lusts of the flesh and the deceitfulness of riches are as real obstacles to Christian living today as they ever were. It is always easier to fall back on the native promptings of impulse or the generally approved codes of behavior than it is to face squarely the moral question of the highest good. Christian preaching has been right in its emphasis on the reality of sin. That reality needs only to be set forth in concrete terms to be recognized as the great evil from which we need deliverance.

THE BROADER MEANING OF REPENTANCE.—We, of course, feel remorse when the evil consequences of our deeds are brought before us. Repentance often stops with this. But the morally serious man is disturbed, not only because he has done the wrong thing, but even more because he finds himself to be the kind of a person capable of doing the wrong thing. It is humiliating to be caught telling a lie; but it is even more humiliating to find that I am the kind of person whose word is not to be trusted. The "conviction of sin" which Christian doctrine has emphasized as the indispensable condition of conversion represents a profound truth. Instead of an emotional sorrow at vague and undefined sinfulness, true repentance consists in an intelligent effort to rid one's self of all the evil influences which lead to sin. Emotional regret is carried over into fruitful planning for a better life.

THE NEED OF SALVATION.—Christian doctrine has steadily insisted on the necessity for divine grace to assist man in his moral endeavors. The foregoing survey of the causes of wrongdoing shows how dependent the individual is on factors out of his immediate control. In order to live rightly one needs to be saved from forces which are hindering or preventing high attainments. Theologically the doctrine of saving grace has often been left in the realm of mystery. Grace has been represented as a kind of metaphysical entity exactly as sin has been abstractly defined. There is need of an interpretation of salvation which will meet the definite causes for wrongdoing with a gospel of a definite way of release.

After having ascertained exactly why a person does not exercise self-control or does not choose the right, salvation can be interpreted in such a way as to provide the precise remedy for the situation. The gospel will then be preached much as Jesus preached it—as the good news of deliverance from very real evils through very definite means of appropriating the saving power of God.

We shall see the mission of Christianity in saving people from pride, arrogance, and selfishness, on the one hand, and, on the other, from disease, from injustice, from bitterness, from hatred, and from all forms of degradation and evil. As Christianity is "a way of life," repentance will be seen as a definite turning from every evil way and toward every good.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Is there less sense of sin today than in former times? What does the word "sin" suggest to you? Observe the feeling of moral indignation aroused in you by each of the following words: coward, sneak, forger, grafter, sinner. Which carries more moral significance, the particular or the general term?
2. If you explain your wrongdoing by reference to general sinfulness, does your explanation help you to remedy your conduct? If you explain it by saying that you were tired out at the time, does this explanation help you to remedy your conduct next time? Which is of more practical importance, a general theoretical explanation of sin or a discovery of specific reasons why men go wrong?
3. Will a good intention enable one to do right? Will a sentiment of Christian love enable one always to do right? What else is necessary?

4. Why does an inexperienced person make mistakes? "We repent in later years of sins of boyhood, which we only now see to be sins." The skilled trades require a period of apprenticeship. Why? Is there anything comparable to this in the process of acquiring moral experience? Did your Sunday-school instruction help you to acquire experience in a helpful way?
5. "Ignorance of the law excuses no man." Why? Has a physician a moral right to remain ignorant of the best medical science? Has an employer a moral right to remain ignorant of the conditions under which his employees work? Has an ignorant man a right to enter the Christian ministry? What harm does an ignorant preacher do?
6. Define "self-control." What occurs when a man "loses his temper"? What is the difference between "righteous indignation" and "getting angry"? What is a psychological "complex"? How does an "inferiority complex" influence one's behavior? What is the moral effect of a persistent evading of certain inevitable contacts?
7. Physically weak children often "cheat" in games because that is the only way in which they can ever score points. How would you go to work to stop such cheating? Has Christianity any concern for sanitation and housing in large cities? If so, why?
8. Is any living person responsible for the existence of the caste system in India? Can an Indian ignore it? Why is there a "race problem" in the United States? Did any living person create it? Can it be evaded? Nearly everyone agrees that war is a terrible evil. Why is it not abolished when men so universally dread and hate it?
9. Which is more serious: to cheat in an examination or to be the kind of person capable of dishonesty? Which is more easily repented of? Can one experience "social repentance"? E.g., Can one repent of a war which he did not help to bring on? How does repentance express itself constructively?

10. What is meant by the phrase "salvation from sin"? Are men usually concerned to be saved from sin or from the consequences of sin? Is there any stereotyped way of salvation?

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## CHAPTER X

### CHRISTIAN INCENTIVES TO RIGHT LIVING

**I**N ROMAN Catholicism, and in some branches of Protestantism, the view prevails that the sacraments are indispensable to salvation; for these are the means of grace expressly appointed by Christ. Without them a genuine Christian life is held to be impossible. The emotional power of participating in the sacraments is unquestionably very great. Those who believe in them find them a most important means of reinforcing the spiritual life. But it is always possible for less seriously minded persons to think of the sacraments as possessing some magical power to secure a claim on future bliss. The sacramental theory of salvation often tends to give secondary place to the moral conditions of Christian salvation. Moreover, the relationship between sacramental salvation and right living is not self-evident. Protestantism has with varying degrees of thoroughness objected to the sacramental conception as morally inadequate.

**THE PROTESTANT CONCEPTION OF CONVERSION.**—Evangelical Christianity substituted for the sacramental conception the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Faith is a deliberate inner attitude. It involves a moral choice. Emphasis is thus laid entirely on the inner life as the sole condition of salvation. The sacra-

ments may be aids to this inner attitude but cannot be substituted for it. But there was frequently carried over into the evangelical conception of the conversion experience something of the same sentiment of mystery which attached to the sacraments. Conversion often was thought of not so much in terms of moral attitudes as in terms of a profound and inscrutable emotional experience. The genuineness of a conversion was tested by a supposed metaphysical potency lying behind the experience rather than merely by the result in character. Conversion did not guarantee moral living any more than did sacramental regeneration.

The response which an easily suggestible person makes to an impassioned evangelistic appeal may be entirely genuine for that time and place; but it may be a response to stimuli which exist only during the revival. The large number of "backsliders" is not to be attributed altogether to the sinfulness of those who "fell from grace." It is to be explained partly by the fact that the conversion experience was treated too much in isolation from the normal conditions of life and therefore did not possess the power to carry over into different situations. To an increasing extent the older emotional evangelism is being modified by a consideration of the principles of religious development. It is discovered that a strong sentiment of loyalty to Christ and a persistent purpose to do what is expected of a Christian may be developed just as surely by the gradual process of education as by the more dramatic experience of a spectacular conversion. Exactly as it is necessary to discover specifically why people do wrong,

so it is imperative to specify precisely why they are impelled to do right.

**FEAR OF CONSEQUENCES OF SIN.**—In its crudest form this motive is presented in terms of the picture of eternal punishment in hell as a punishment for sin. For many Christians today, however, the conception of hell has become so vague that there is very little real incentive for moral living to be derived from it. In the broader sense of the term, however, fear of consequences is an important motive in conduct. We teach children to maintain certain habits in diet and cleanliness by instilling fear of sickness. We are all controlled in our behavior by fear of public opinion as well as by fear of physical or financial or moral disaster. When a religious interpretation is given to the order of nature, the consequences of an action may be looked upon as evidences of the divine approval or disapproval.

The motive of fear takes on a higher ethical value when it exists as fear of things which might bring moral harm to others. To have an abhorrence of being a person whose influence might affect others adversely or of doing things detrimental to their highest welfare is a form of fear which may well be respected as one incentive to Christian conduct. We value behavior in terms of its effects and may well fear to set in motion any influence or process whose results might normally be expected to bring evil. Furthermore, the desire to shield others as far as possible from evil existing outside us is a normal motive of Christian solicitude, for the Christian is concerned not merely with being the

sort of person he ought to be and doing as much good as possible but also in a wider process of shielding life from moral harm and overcoming evil with good.

**GRATITUDE FOR SALVATION.**—Luther held that the true Christian experiences such an amazing work of grace in his heart that he is filled with gratitude and love and is eager to give himself completely to the service of God, who has done so much for him. This sentiment of gratitude is a very common one in books of devotion. It lifts Christian conduct above all petty calculation. It makes one glad of the opportunity to do something which God wants done. But it presupposes a somewhat definite and intense kind of religious experience. In our day, however, we cannot assume that everyone will have so intense a religious experience as to make the feeling of abounding gratitude supreme. Many Christians today are honestly perplexed and think of religion as a quest for God rather than as an experience of complete peace. Such persons will find the motive to Christian living in something other than the radiant and unquestioning joy which Luther emphasized.

**THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF A DIVINE CALL.**—A powerful incentive with great souls is the conviction that God has summoned them to some task to be done in his name. To feel that God has laid upon me some task to be accomplished is a powerful motive. Here emphasis is put upon God's trust in me to perform what he wants done. It is a motive which appeals to heroic souls. In our day of theological perplexity it is perhaps a stronger one with many people than is the motive of

gratitude for an accomplished salvation. Indeed, as the educational conception of the way in which one becomes a Christian gains ground, the appeal to a sense of personal responsibility comes to be more and more prominent. To present to vigorous men the opportunity for Christian service in such a way as to enable them to feel the glory of being instruments in the accomplishment of something which God wants done is a kind of religious experience which is not widely enough recognized at its face value.

**LOVE FOR JESUS.**—Among the strongest motives in human experience is love for a person. Such love is at the same time a sentiment of gratitude for the privilege of sharing the life of the beloved and a sentiment of eagerness to do the things which will please him. It is through Jesus that the Christian comes to his religious experience. It is to Jesus that he turns for light on the pathway of life. Bearing the name of Christ, the Christian is impelled by love for Christ. Such love for Jesus leads to the never ceasing attempt to understand better his teachings and to catch the spirit of his life. It is this love for Jesus which gives to the Fourth Gospel its peculiar spiritual power. Gratitude for the experience of salvation through Jesus is one aspect of this love; but it extends further. It leads one to rejoice not only in what Jesus has done for him but also in what he may do for and with Jesus.

**LOVE FOR OTHERS.**—The incentive of love for Christ reinforces the dynamic of love for other persons. Intense love for any person makes us want to please him, to be like him, to avoid doing things which displease

him, to bring to him the finest opportunities, and to shield him from evil. People who love and who are lovable, therefore, have vastly greater moral power than do those who are devoid of enthusiasm for others. To make good winsome is the most effective way of making it influential. Here we have the same principle at work as we find in Jesus who made good humanly attractive and revealed the love of God in his own person. It is no overstatement to say that God is everlastingly using this principle to win the allegiance of humanity to truth and goodness. This also is one reason why there is a closeness between Christianity and the best in family life. Parents may be tremendously influential teachers not merely because they have the child from the first and are with him constantly but even more because the patterns of living which they represent are made attractive through love. In a sense the Christian way of living can be inculcated only in a fatherly, motherly, sisterly, or brotherly spirit.

Perhaps equally effective as a support for right living is the spirit of appreciation in one who serves, teaches, or helps because he discerns potential fineness even in people who are ethically immature, who make mistakes, and who go astray but who through love may be helped to overcome these infirmities. Whether considered in the personal life of the individual or as an influence working in and through various group relationships, love is the great inner power that issues in vital Christian conduct. It is both "the fulfilment of the law" and the inspiration to the highest life.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—One of the strongest influences in human life is the sense of loyalty to a group. The “gang spirit” among boys, membership in a political party, in a lodge, in a professional society, are some of the familiar forms of group loyalty. It is to be feared that membership in the church has too often been prized primarily as a means of getting to heaven. The uplifting power of the consciousness of sharing in a noble work is not sufficiently emphasized. Many a Christian is temperamentally or intellectually incapable of feeling very intensely the force of the somewhat difficult theories of salvation set forth by theologians. But such persons love to feel themselves members of the goodly company of disciples of Jesus. Their religion consists largely in sharing the social mind of the church. Such devotion is capable of sustaining Christian service of the finest kind, as many a pastor knows.

THE IDEAL OF A CHRISTIAN SOCIETY.—It should never be forgotten that Christian faith includes not only the creation of good will in individuals but also the belief in the Kingdom of God. The ultimate good to which the Christian looks forward is citizenship in a society where good will shall be expressed in laws and customs as well as in the minds of individuals. In recent times there has been a preaching of the “social gospel,” which means the belief that social organizations may be “converted” no less than individuals. The part which the Christian conscience has played in the abolition of slavery, in the fight against liquor and slums, in the education of public sentiment in opposi-

tion to the brutality of war, is evidence of the expansive power of the religious dynamic engendered by the creation of Christian good will. Thus, in addition to the motive drawn from a personal religious experience, there is the inspiration of the belief in the Kingdom of God. This belief leads Christian people to face the challenge of evil circumstances with the consciousness of an inspiring inheritance of hope. It makes possible such sublime faith as that expressed in the statement "One with God is a majority."

**THE MORAL POWER OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.**—The moral behavior of men is inspired primarily by great emotions of love or loyalty. Men want righteousness to be *interesting* as well as good. When a noble cause can appeal to a sense of romantic adventure, it has enlisted a spiritual power which no amount of rational explanation can produce. Christian faith means such a romantic adventure. It boldly affirms that the supreme goal is life eternal. It interprets human conduct in terms of a divine solicitude for man's highest good. By keeping before the mind the question of whether one's way of living is in harmony with God, the loftiest possible significance is introduced into otherwise prosaic tasks. It is well, in conclusion, to remind ourselves of certain other aspects of the Christian's religious experience which give spiritual power.

**A NEW SENSE OF PERSONAL DIGNITY.**—The Christian gospel affirms the infinite value of every man. In spite of sorry failures, and even in the face of depravity and sin, man is worth serving. It is true that not every Christian realizes the full possibilities of this experience.

But, at its best, it gives the consciousness of being a citizen of the Kingdom of God; and this citizenship, like citizenship in any worthy community, ennobles life with a sense of new importance. In the face of the seeming insignificance of human life the Christian dares to live as becomes a child of God, heir to invisible glory.

**THE REALIZATION OF DIVINE REINFORCEMENT.**—The belief that there is a moral purpose in the cosmic process makes it possible to devote one's self to a moral cause, confident that thereby one is enlisting the co-operation of God. From a practical point of view faith is the means of "sublimating" many an impulse which otherwise finds no wholesome pathway of expression. The socializing effect of communion with God as a means of giving outlet to pent-up or concealed emotions should be more widely recognized. In prayer one can be his honest self. Integrity of life becomes possible in this relation to One who understands as no human being understands. Such an inner unification of purpose can then be carried over into the everyday situation, enabling one to overcome in the consciousness of the new-found strength.

**THE PRIVILEGE OF BEARING THE NAME OF JESUS.**—The Christian is one who has gained the right to a name which arouses reverence and adoration. He is a follower, a disciple, a younger brother of Jesus. By almost common consent the ideals of Jesus are revered and trusted by all who long for righteousness. The Christian professes himself to belong to the goodly company of those who wholeheartedly love and trust Jesus.

There is a great unused spiritual power in the privilege of calling one's self by that name. To be a good servant of Jesus Christ is an honor capable of inspiring any man to his best.

**THE SIMPLE DESIRE TO DO RIGHT.**—There is in us an innate appreciation of doing things well rather than badly. This is akin to the sense of good workmanship. We want to do a good job of personal living, to play the game well, to do our part in a co-operative process in which people depend upon us and need to be able to trust us. We do not want to let others down, therefore we must do our part in building up a social structure of good living. We must support others in their good efforts. This is a simple and universally applicable motive. It is akin to the desire to strike true notes rather than to create discords, to perform our part skilfully and dependably rather than awkwardly. It is akin to the aesthetic sense. It is a part of self-respect and of respect for the process of living.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to be "saved"? Is salvation ever conceived as something which can be attained without a moral life? In what sense does the Roman Catholic hold that the sacraments are indispensable to salvation? Are Quakers (who use no sacraments) less morally worthy than those who do use the sacraments?
2. "Each revival 'burns over the ground' so that an interval must elapse before another can arise with power." Is this a moral defect? "Conversion is continuous with religious growth in both process and content." Is this the usual conception of conversion? Why is there so much "backsliding" after a public revival?

3. How large a part does the fear of hell have in influencing Christian conduct? Does this motive lead to the highest moral conduct?
4. Is gratitude a powerful motive for generous conduct? What place did Luther make for gratitude in Christian living? Is the religious experience of everyone such that gratitude is the dominant emotion?
5. Does the sense of responsibility give moral power? Why is the captain of a wrecked ship always the last to leave? What gave to John Knox the moral courage to withstand Mary Queen of Scots, his lawful sovereign?
6. Which is the stronger motive, gratitude for personal salvation or a sense of being engaged in the work which Jesus wants done? Dr. Sheldon in his book, *In His Steps*, pictured true Christians as asking constantly "What would Jesus do?" Is this a practicable way of cultivating a Christian attitude?
7. Why do you belong to a church? How does your church help you to be at your best? What is the difference in moral effect between a sermon and a lecture? What would be the moral loss in a community if there were no churches?
8. How does the belief that the Kingdom of God is to be established bring moral power? What is meant by the phrase "Christianizing the social order"?
9. How does the experience of discipleship to Jesus create an attitude of good will? How does this experience help a Christian to discover what he ought to do?

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH

**T**HE Christian church is the one organization whose sole purpose is to maintain Christian ideals. The individual Christian owes his religious and moral convictions largely to the influence of the church. He expects membership in the church to enlighten him as to his duty and to strengthen him to fulfil his duty. The wholesomeness and effectiveness of Christian living in other realms is dependent largely on a wholesome relationship to the church. If loyalty to the church be lacking, the life of a Christian is seriously impaired.

**THE SERVICE RENDERED BY THE CHURCH.**—(1) The church acquaints men with the gospel. While occasionally an individual may attain a Christian life through isolated reading and reflection without any definite contact with the church, such an experience is rare. Normally, it is through the church that one is brought face to face with God and made to realize one's responsibilities in terms of God's will.

2. The church enables the individual to become a member of a group definitely dedicated to Christian living. It must, of course, be recognized that not every church lives up to this ideal. With all its faults, however, the church professes to require of all its members a kind of life which Christ approves.

3. The church unwaveringly proclaims a faith in a better life for the individual and a better world in which he may live. It is true that this faith is often compromised by circumstances. But the church refuses ultimately to regard man as a helpless product of biological or social forces. It treats a man as a child of God and assumes that with God's help he can to some degree express his divine inheritance. It proclaims the gospel of the Kingdom of God and encourages its members to hope and strive for the coming of that Kingdom.

**THE DUTY OF LOYALTY TO THE CHURCH.**—In Catholicism it is taken for granted that every Christian will be absolutely loyal to the church. In belief, in conduct, in ways of thinking, the guidance of the church is to be unquestioningly accepted. Such loyalty is identified with loyalty to Jesus Christ; for, according to the Catholic theory, the church was officially established by Christ to exercise divine guidance. The Protestant cannot give his conscience into the keeping of the church. His loyalty, therefore, is not so simple as assent without assuming responsibility for that to which he assents. He is in duty bound to test the standards of the church by what he believes to be Christian ideals.

**WHAT DOES THE CHRISTIAN OWE TO THE CHURCH?**—The Christian owes it to his church to lead a worthy Christian life. In Protestantism, responsibility for this is left with the individual. Adverse criticism of the church is due largely to the unworthy lives of church members. There is no moral dignity in a life of indifference and neglect which only in time of stress turns to

the church for "salvation." It is to the glory of the church that unselfish solicitude for even unworthy souls is constantly exercised. But one who has the spirit of Jesus will seek to help the church as truly as he will seek to be helped by it.

Loyalty will also express itself in the eager desire to correct any faults which the church may possess, so that the church may be Christian in fact as well as in name. While a "high" church may rest on its official credentials, the very life of a Protestant church depends on the voluntary love and confidence of the community in which it exists. The primary duty of a Christian is to endeavor to make his church so evident a home of Christian love and service that it will be gratefully welcomed in the community where it is located.

**THE VALUE OF A HISTORICAL VIEW OF THE CHURCH.** —The church, like any other organization, preserves and hands down from one generation to the next the deposit of a long social history. Inevitably this social inheritance preserves some items derived from an almost forgotten past. Doubtless a body of Christians organizing *de novo* today would never think of some of the "essentials" of the traditional organization if these were not suggested by long-continued habit. A moral problem is caused by some of these "essentials." The church may use an ancient creed which does not adequately express modern faith or which may even include statements open to serious objection when critically examined. Rituals may be actually "strange" to anyone not familiar with them. The official declara-

tions of the church may seem to lay great stress on matters which have long since ceased to have any vital significance. High-church conceptions of the validity of the Christian ministry stand in the way of Christian unity. The sanctity of forms of worship prevents that democratic interchange of thought and aspiration indispensable to a living religion.

If we are to judge fairly, it is necessary to have an appreciation of the historical process by which these forms and creeds came to be part and parcel of the church life. Usually, when we can trace a church practice back to its origin, we find that it is an expression of a positive and eager desire for noble Christian living. The particular circumstances connected with its origin gave to it its peculiar form. But the form should not prevent us from realizing its spiritual purpose.

THE MORAL ASPECTS OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF.—There are two aspects of the belief of the individual which must be considered. In the first place one's belief must be an expression of loyalty to the church to which he belongs. It gains much of its significance from the fact that he is confessing a faith common to his fellow-Christians. But, on the other hand, the individual must feel that what he professes to believe is *true*. Otherwise there would be introduced into the very center of his spiritual life an element of hypocrisy. The ideal situation would be a profession of faith in which a person at the same time confesses his sense of fellowship with his fellow-Christians and also expresses his personal convictions. The difficulty of securing such a profession acceptable to everybody is obvious.

THE HIGH-CHURCH CONCEPTION OF "THE FAITH."—It is widely believed that the content of Christian doctrine, in its essentials, was once for all proclaimed by Jesus Christ and that all disciples of Jesus are in duty bound to hold and defend the faith which he inculcated. According to this view, any wilful departure from this authoritative faith is to be regarded as sin; for it implies a rejection of the guidance of Christ. This conception of faith engenders a fine spirit of loyalty. But it meets with serious difficulties which cannot be overlooked. It is questionable whether there is real historical evidence that the content of faith was so definitely formulated from the beginning. There have always been differences of opinion in the Christian community. If it be assumed that there is only one valid system of belief, the church holding that system will be faced with perpetual warfare against honest dissenters. To apply the test of conformity to a creed would include those who take their confession lightly and would exclude many who are more concerned to be inwardly honest than to be conventionally correct.

How Did "THE FAITH" ARISE?—Religious experience always precedes formulations of that experience. The first Christians had no New Testament. They were working out their problems of belief and conduct under the inspiration of their immediate sense of discipleship of Jesus. They were not sure about some things. They had serious differences of opinion on important matters. It required some three centuries of discussion to prepare for the Nicene definition of the nature of Christ. Differences of opinion as to the ade-

quacy and the meaning of the Nicene Creed continued for centuries—indeed, have continued to this day. Doctrine has never been a fixed and final thing in the life of the church. There is a real history of Christian thinking. The historical understanding of the rise and development of Christian belief makes it clear that theological doctrines are never so finally formulated that they may not be revised. Indeed, a living faith finds a way of revising them, either by new formulas or by new interpretations of the old.

**THE LITURGICAL USE OF CREEDS.**—In some churches the recital of a creed is a part of the regular confession of faith. Often a conscientious person finds himself in a real difficulty. He hesitates to say that he believes what he really does not believe; but he also hesitates to set himself in opposition to the customs of the church which he loves and of which he wishes to be a loyal member. With the growing historical spirit of our day, it is increasingly recognized that the creeds are most truthfully understood if they are regarded as symbols of a larger and more vital faith rather than as statements restricting the thinking of men. No creed states all that is involved in living faith. One can heartily reverence the purpose of a creed and sympathize with the faith which it faultily expresses even when one frankly recognizes that he would not choose that particular form to express his own personal faith. When an ancient creed is thus used as a social means of expressing a common devotion, it enables living men to feel their responsibility for the wholesome continuation of a great religious tradition. It is only when a formal

creed is used in such a way as to coerce the conscience of the individual that it is morally objectionable. A better historical knowledge of the origin and the meaning of creeds would preclude the dogmatic use of them. As symbols of social aspiration they are of great value. As fetters put upon the thinking of the individual they are intolerable. Unfortunately, the creeds most in use are found to consist almost exclusively of doctrinal statements. They are seriously defective in moral content. This, however, is largely made good in the liturgical prayers.

One who believes that a creed is an expression of truth as given by God will consider it his duty to defend this creed as it stands. However, the person who thinks of creeds as representing man's efforts to express truth as progressively understood will take it for granted that they are subject to revision, somewhat as the content of knowledge in any other area is subject to restatement.

**THE CHRISTIAN TESTING OF DOCTRINE.**—There are many considerations which must be taken into account in the testing of belief. But there is one searching test which should never be omitted. The Christian must ask if the holding and defense of the doctrine which he affirms makes for a more Christlike spirit in his life. An undoubtedly true doctrine may be employed in an un-Christlike way. Bigots remain bigots even if they utter true doctrines. On the other hand, there are persons whose theological views seem to us to be absurd but who put us to shame by their unselfish spirit of Christian love. The orthodox man who would apply ecclesiastical pressure in order to secure uniformity of

belief and the enthusiastic liberal who ridicules what seems to him to be credulity both forget that good will is the Christian test of doctrine. No one is a better Christian for being unwillingly coerced into acquiescence. While each individual will, of course, testify gladly to the power of his own honest beliefs, he will, if he possesses the spirit of a disciple of Jesus, also ask whether the way in which he holds and maintains his doctrines makes him a better Christian and challenges those who differ from him to make the same test.

**THE CHRISTIAN TEST OF WORSHIP.**—The Christian test of worship, like the Christian test of doctrine, leads one to ask whether attendance at the service of worship makes one more Christlike in attitude and behavior. Jesus suggested this test when he bade one who had brought a gift to the altar to ask himself whether he was still unreconciled to a fellow-man. If he was maintaining an unloving spirit toward his brother, he must leave his gift and first go and be reconciled. Worship should be used to reinforce Christian behavior, not as a substitute for such behavior.

The influence of worship is very great. When one is a member of a worshiping group, one feels one's self to be in the solemn presence of God. One comes under the influence of a social mind dedicated to the best. One's sense of religious need is deepened. One is encouraged to live for an hour at one's best in the company of others, who also are aspiring to live at their best. If only care be taken to correlate the exaltation which comes from worship with the circumstances of everyday life, the Christian may carry over from the

church service an extraordinary reinforcement of his moral purpose.

**SUNDAY AND SABBATH OBSERVANCE.**—In countries which have been strongly influenced by Calvinism, great stress has been laid on the strict observance of Sunday as a day holy to the Lord, on the theory that this meant keeping the Fourth Commandment. There is, however, no evidence that the Sabbath legislation of the Old Testament was ever intended to apply to the first day of the week. The Christian test should be applied to the use of Sunday. Fortunately, we have very plain indications of Jesus' own attitude toward a formal observance of the Sabbath. "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath." Sunday should be so observed as to make men more Christlike in spirit. The services of worship in the church are, of course, of primary importance. But it is quite contrary to the spirit of Christian living to suppose that there is anything meritorious about church-going apart from the spiritual inspiration and moral strengthening that may be thus attained. Nonecclesiastical culture interests and wholesome recreation have also their rightful place in the Christian observance of Sunday. The Christian young man who takes a group of boys for a hike on Sunday afternoon may be rendering a service which could be given in no other way so effectively. Music, art, good reading, neighborly visiting, community meetings, and the like may all serve to reinforce Christian attitudes.

One of the great evils of our day is the commercialization of Sunday. Thousands of young people on their

one free day in the week are allured to spend money and time in so-called recreation resorts planned almost solely for the financial gain of the owners. The natural desire for pleasure is deliberately exploited for the sake of financial gain. No finer Christian service could be rendered than to plan for the recreation of youth on Sunday in ways which should have reference primarily to uplifting results in character. Another evil, which fortunately has aroused the Christian conscience, is the industrial slavery which has made a normal Sunday impossible for many men and women, and side by side with this the unemployment which does not permit others to have any work from which to rest. This also does violence to the spirit of the religious commands about work and rest. It is a travesty on just and brotherly sharing at the same time that it leads to other evils, such as the loss of skill, damage to self-respect, want, and misery and with these an inevitable result in bitterness and social cleavage. At the same time the more fortunate tend to become hardened to the misfortunes of others. Christian sentiment will not only insist on the elimination of unnecessary work on Sunday; it will also help to provide normal opportunities for work, for leisure, and for the cultivation of the higher life.

**THE ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH AS A BROTHERHOOD.**—The fact that the church brings together people of all ages and conditions and creates a fellowship in God, who is no respecter of persons, gives added ethical meaning to the life of each individual concerned and expresses something of the spiritual solidarity of men. The cleavages which exist in society

and which often aggravate unethical relations are bridged at least in part in the fellowship of the church. Although the ethical and social significance of the church as a brotherhood and a larger family of God has never been fully realized in fact, the very existence of the church as an instrument of brotherhood and a group of people of good will constitutes a striking ethical challenge to every individual. One of the finest forms of advance in church life in our time is in the extent to which members of different churches have come to think less in terms of denominationalism and more in terms of the unity of the Christian movement and of Christian fellowship in that movement.

**THE PROBLEM OF CHURCH UNITY.**—The moral waste of divisions in Christendom is self-evident. We are coming to see the absurdity of a denominational rivalry which plants in a town a dozen struggling inefficient churches in the place of one or two well-equipped churches with strong leaders. The desire for Christian unity is a welcome expression of a genuinely Christian spirit. But when the attempt is made to put into practice this sentiment, it is discovered that the Catholic conception of church loyalty still casts its shadow over Protestantism. That conception brands dissent as sin. There is only one way, according to Catholic policy, in which Christendom can be re-united. That way prescribes that all branches of Christendom, except Catholicism, shall repent of the sin of heresy or schism and shall docilely return to the "true" fold. A Protestant denomination generally feels that the "distinctive doctrines" of the denomination must

be expressly affirmed in any union program. The proposal to replace our present denominational situation with organic church unity thus meets with almost insuperable difficulties.

**THE PRIMARY NECESSITY FOR HONORING CHURCH LOYALTY.**—Existing denominations arose out of a profound stirring of Christian conscience. It would be morally incredible that Lutherans should ever repent of Luther's attitude toward the Roman Catholic church or that Methodists should ever become apologetic in their attitude toward John Wesley. If organic church unity is ever to be attained, it must be by a policy of including these loyalties in a larger unity. But as long as any of them are regarded as "heresies," such a policy of inclusion is out of the question.

**THE GROWING SPIRIT OF CHURCH CO-OPERATION.**—The desire for Christian unity is finding practical expression in the idea of interdenominational co-operation with leaves each body entirely free to determine its own beliefs and polity. In the present state of Christian sentiment, when differences of conviction on doctrinal questions are so great, it would seem that the spirit of Christlikeness is likely to be better promoted by practical co-operation in tasks on which all can agree than in the attempt to secure unity in doctrine or organization under one form of ecclesiastical polity.

There are encouraging developments in the merging of some church bodies, and there is an increasing amount of co-operation among denominations. The actual unity of those who are engaged in common tasks and are bound together by true fellow-feeling is not to

be overlooked. Thus the great number of denominations may create an impression of less unity than actually exists in practice.

Interdenominational agencies are taking a significant place in the leadership of modern Christianity. Among them the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the International Council of Religious Education, and the councils for home and foreign missions and other agencies express the sense of unity in Christian experience which is larger than the fellowship of any one church. The World Council of Churches also, which was launched when the world was at the brink of war, is a witness to a unity which promises better things for mankind. The need of such an instrument of world-wide fellowship could not be more glaringly emphasized than in the deadly antagonisms of our times. State and local councils of churches also are doing their part in their own areas to advance the great task of creating fellow-feeling among all Christians. Every bit of brotherly co-operation adds to the spirit of unity of the Christian movement and does at least something to advance the unity of mankind.

**THE RELATION OF THE CHURCH TO THE STATE.**—There have been three distinct attitudes toward the state assumed in different stages of the history of Christianity, and now a fourth is emerging. The early Christians, as we have seen, believed that existing political organizations would speedily be done away with. There was no thought of trying to make the state an instrument of Christianity.

Later, when Christianity became the one official

religion of the Empire, the question arose as to how church and state should be related to each other. In theory each had its divinely appointed field; but in practice these fields often overlapped and a contest for authority resulted. The church held that the state ought to promote and uphold the Christianizing of the world. It ought to punish heretics, stamp out schismatic movements, and enact into law Christian conceptions.

The third attitude is made necessary by the secularization of modern politics. In America the separation of church and state is a part of the fundamental law. Church members have no exclusive rights before the law. This means an abandonment of the medieval position. It is questionable whether the common phrase "a Christian nation" can fitly be applied to a country where Jews and non-Christians have equal rights with church members. The church in America must think of itself as a voluntary organization, protected, like any other legitimate organization, by the laws of the land but with no superior claims on the government due simply to the fact that it bears the name "Christian." As an organization it ought to influence public opinion in the direction of supporting enterprises which make for better standards of living; but it will advocate these, not because they are technically "Christian," but rather because their inherent moral and social value is so evident that Christian people, dedicated to the good, will rejoice with all right-minded people in their establishment.

The fourth attitude, which is now emerging, is neces-

sitated by the rise of totalitarianism. A new situation arose in Soviet Russia, in that the official attitude became unfavorable to all religions. In Germany, while not officially hostile to religion as such, the National Socialist Reich has sought to dominate all life and to compel religious bodies to fit into its system. Consequently, both in Russia and in Germany religious bodies have been subject to hampering restrictions and in some cases to bitter persecution. Christians have tried to be loyal to the good in these governments, but they have had to maintain a firm resistance to the encroachments of a political system which has been either domineering or antagonistic.

The ethical situation has been complicated by the fact that in both of these countries the official churches had previously been in alliance with despotic governments and that, when these governments were overthrown, the churches suffered. In Italy and in Spain, where also the churches are in contact with totalitarian governments, their relations with these governments are somewhat comparable with the earlier situations in Germany and Russia.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS

1. Suppose all preaching should be done away with, what difference do you think it would make in the morality of men?
2. Are Catholics usually more loyal to their church than Protestants are to theirs? Why is there so much disparagement of the church today? What are the adverse criticisms which you most frequently hear? What is the difference between "knocking" the church and constructive criticism of the church?

3. What is the difference between a belief and an opinion? Which can be more readily changed? Why? What is meant by the phrase "to take a thing on faith"? Would this phrase adequately express the way in which we hold our religious beliefs? Distinguish between the personal faith of a Christian and a creed used by his church. Do the two always coincide?
4. Can any existing branch of Christianity rightfully claim to possess *the* truth? If so, on what grounds? Do you think that the moral life of a Christian can be adequately measured by ascertaining his attitude toward the Apostles' Creed? What is a heretic? Heretics were formerly severely punished. Why? What happens to a heretic in the United States? How do you account for the change of attitude?
5. The Nicene Creed was adopted in A.D. 325. How did Christians know what they ought to believe before the Nicene Creed was promulgated? How does the historian explain the origin of a creed? Has Christian belief actually remained unchanged through the centuries? Do you hold the same beliefs as your grandfather did? Is it your Christian duty to believe as he did?
6. Does your church include a creed as part of the ritual? Do you like to repeat it? Why? What would be your feeling toward a friend who objected to repeating it? Do you prefer an ancient creed or a modern formula for liturgical purposes?
7. Is it possible to affirm a Christian doctrine in an un-Christian spirit? Do "strict" parents and pastors ever create a prejudice against church doctrines and practices? "I had doctrine crammed down my throat when I was a child, and I resolved that when I grew up I would never have anything to do with the church." What was wrong with the situation which created such a revolt?
8. What is a sabbatarian? Are Sabbath and Sunday the same? Formerly libraries, art galleries, and baseball grounds were closed on Sunday. Now they are frequently open. Which policy do you approve? Why? Are commercialized amusements more harmful on Sunday than on any other day? Why do the churches oppose unnecessary labor on Sunday?

9. If a town were already amply supplied with Protestant churches, would a Catholic think there ought to be a Catholic church there also? Why? Would a Methodist think there ought to be a Methodist church? If so, why? Which is better in a town of 2,000 population, seven weak churches or two strong ones? Does denominationalism in your own town make for a strong type of Christianity?
10. Contrast the idea of federation or of co-operation with that of organic church unity. Which seems to you to permit the freer exercise of loyalty? Which puts most emphasis on practical morality?
11. What was the relation between the church and the state in the Middle Ages? What is an "established church"? Why is there no established church in the United States? Is disestablishment a moral gain or a moral loss? In what ways may the church in the United States legitimately exercise an influence in politics?

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

THE family is the most inevitable social group. Human beings normally pass their infancy in the care of parents and learn from them characteristic attitudes toward life. As children grow up and parents grow older, there is a remarkable series of changed attitudes on the part of both parents and children. In almost no other relationship is there such necessity for constant readjustments. Familiarity and intimacy make possible an extraordinary frankness in family relations, so that questions may be discussed with a minimum of formality. For these reasons the family is the most important realm of social education. Where family life is happy, the members are admirably prepared to assume wholesome relations with other people. Where the family life is unhappy, the enforced intimacy of the members makes for nervous tension and abnormal social attitudes and calls for the greatest resourcefulness and patience in creating the harmony which is required for wholesome development all around.

**THE FAMILY IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY A CHRISTIAN INSTITUTION.**—The family exists in non-Christian lands as well as in Christendom. It antedates Christianity. It is the outcome of a long period of social evolution.

In many ways it represents the outcome of social experiment. While we may learn from the history of the family some fundamental facts which must underlie any ethical conception of family life, it is also true that the period of experimentation is not entirely in the past.

It needs only a superficial observation of modern life to see that we are today in the midst of a somewhat rapid evolution of feeling and thinking concerning the family. The distressing prevalence of divorce is a symptom of deeper maladjustments which call for an approach along lines of understanding and for more complete development of character and personality. If we recognize that the life of the family must inevitably change as the conditions of life in general change, we shall be prepared to face the facts rather than to insist on some unyielding theory. The Christian ideal is concerned with the establishment of wholesome personal relationships rather than with abstract theories.

**SEX ATTRACTION AND MARRIAGE.**—Biologically, the continuance of the human race depends on the union of two parents of opposite sex. The sex instinct is one of the most powerful passions in human experience. Its very strength creates a serious moral problem. If it is permitted to find unbridled expression the direst evils result. Decency, honor, regard for others, may all be overwhelmed by the onrush of this terrible physical urge. Some of the vilest forms of degradation are due to the satisfaction of the sex impulse without any moral control. From the earliest days of Christianity down to the present, Christians have been warned in the most

solemn fashion not to yield to the lure of uncontrolled lust. Marriage provides for the use of sex in terms of mutual devotion and as a part of the complete union of husband and wife. In Christian interpretations marriage involves such a glorifying of the love of man for woman that it is the basis for the highest kind of generous living. Mere sex attraction must be supplemented by the sober purpose to be faithful to each other during life and to make of this life-union the basis for a constantly growing experience of joint responsibilities. The religious celebration of marriage is the fitting expression of this lofty ideal.

**THE SACRAMENTAL CONCEPTION OF MARRIAGE.**—In the Roman Catholic church marriage is held to be a sacrament imparting to the contracting parties a supernatural grace. The high purpose of this religious interpretation of marriage is evident. The sacramental theory, however, presupposes that there can be no perfect marriage without the sacrament. But this presupposition is contrary to fact. There are plenty of genuine marriages, morally irreproachable, which have not been sacramentally celebrated. On the other hand, the mere fact that a union of two persons has been ecclesiastically declared does not guarantee a happy outcome if the personal and moral factors be lacking. This Catholic conception of marriage has influenced Protestant thinking, even though Protestantism repudiated the sacramental theory. It is generally felt that there is something sacred about the marriage ceremony as such, and much discussion of the problem of divorce is more concerned to preserve the imagined

sanctity of the ceremony than to get at the real root of the difficulty.

**THE PROTESTANT CONCEPTION OF MARRIAGE.**—In repudiating the sacramental theory of marriage, Protestantism took a long step toward a revaluation of marriage on the basis of facts. Emphasis was laid on the existence of genuine love and a mutual purpose to live together permanently in the enjoyment of this love and in the joint assumption of certain responsibilities. But there was a persistence of the feeling that ecclesiastical regulation was essential. Recourse was had to the Scriptures in order to discover the divine pattern for the family life. The subordination of the wife to the husband was preserved in the form of marriage ceremony. It was difficult to get rid entirely of the many "impediments" which Roman Catholic practice had set up in the form of ecclesiastical affinities (e.g., ineligibility of god-parents). In the consideration of divorce the attempt has usually been made to discover some technical "scriptural" rule. As long as the all-important thing about marriage is felt to be the ecclesiastical regulation of it, Christianity will be exalting formal aspects of the matter at the expense of moral considerations. This is not to be understood as a depreciation of the importance of church weddings. It is rather a plea that the church's interpretation should not emphasize incidentals above essentials.

**THE CHRISTIAN TEST OF MARRIAGE.**—The primary reason for marriage is the mutual need of man and woman for each other. True marriage must be based on genuine personal love between the contracting

parties. Moreover, while the theory of the indissolubility of marriage has usually been derived from the sacramental nature of the ceremony, this theory does embody an all-important principle. The love which brings together two persons in marriage should be so profound that both ardently long for a permanent union. A true marriage is one in which the lovers are sure that they will always remain lovers. The idea of "trial marriages" is contradictory to the very sentiments of true love. If any trial at all is to be made, it would be better for the lovers to try the experiment of getting along without each other. If they can be satisfied to do this, they surely would not want to risk marriage on such doubtful grounds. It is this inner conviction that the lovers will always be true to each other, will always prefer each other to any other persons, will always want to share life together, which differentiates marriage from those temporary alliances which degrade and debauch. The sex impulse is subordinated to moral control only when it is accompanied by such personal regard for the loved one and such a reverence for the personal dignity of both parties that it takes its place in the larger and more comprehensive life of mutual regard. The Christian test of Christlikeness can be applied to this larger devotion. It could scarcely be applied to any ephemeral sex attraction.

**THE NEED OF A COMMON MORAL PURPOSE.**—It is characteristic of merely physical sex attraction that it is strongly emotional but notoriously fickle. This is one of the evils of an unrestrained indulgence in love on its physical side. The permanence of a marriage must be

based on a moral purpose as well as on personal love. The Christian ceremony pledges the lovers to certain mutual duties "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer." Sooner or later the idealistic glamour with which the lover surrounds his beloved will give way to actual facts. No one is absolutely perfect. Marriage is not only the consummation of a period of courtship; it is also a venture into a new kind of life. There are undoubtedly risks. There is inevitable disillusionment. It is only as the lovers undertake morally each to help the other to live at his or her best that the experiment can be carried on without sore trials. Too frequently the importance of this is not realized. The husband may neglect to share with his wife that knowledge concerning the family income which alone can enable her to assume a responsible share for wise expenditure. The wife may have or acquire culture interests in which the husband has little or no part. The Christian ideal of marriage, of course, takes it for granted that both husband and wife will be active members of a Christian church, obtaining thus the constant stimulus of religious devotion to enable them worthily to face their common responsibilities. The celebration of the wedding in the church may be a strong reinforcement of the highest interpretation of the meaning of marriage. The Christian minister who performs a ceremony has an opportunity to bring into prominence precisely that moral glorification of true love which is essential to a happy union.

Many ministers, having prepared themselves by careful study, are giving great help to young couples in

premarital counseling, which gives a clearer understanding of the high significance of Christian marriage and emphasizes the social and spiritual meaning of the home at the same time that access is given to information and guidance where needed with respect to the sexual adjustments which are to be made. Christian marriage must be solemnized according to the highest standards of responsibility and of helpfulness.

**PARENTHOOD.**—Normally marriage means the establishment of a family into which children come. The love which bound together the lovers then finds a new and wonderful expansion in parental love. The presence of children in the home furnishes the best opportunity for the exercise of that common moral purpose which is essential to the permanence of married felicity. The experience of parenthood is a potent means of creating public sentiment for better physical and social conditions. The desire to enable one's own children to live the best life leads to the establishment of many educational and recreational advantages which might otherwise have been neglected.

A Christian view of the values which are most worth seeking puts a high estimate on an adequate family nurtured in ideals and enriched by participation in the culture of the race. Young people will do well to bring their hopes for an adequate number of children into the very heart of their family planning. Our total economic setup must make this possible, otherwise the nation may drift toward disaster in failure to reproduce the best stock in sufficient numbers. Many Protestant churches even now are suffering at this point. One

item in the ethics of creating and transmitting values is the production of people who are most likely to transmit these values, namely, children in good families.

At the same time there is danger in reckless propagation of the less fit and even of depressing standards of health and culture in families in which both inheritance and nurture would be good but in which too frequent childbearing would jeopardize the health both of mothers and of children. Children should be wanted by their parents, and Christian love requires that the child be treasured in the home. It is true that each newborn babe evokes such a wealth of parental affection that the welcome is normally provided by natural instincts. But the Christian duty of parents involves something more than mere affection. It includes the recognition of the rights of a child to such physical and educational advantages as will enable him to realize his best capacities. Social workers are keenly aware of the inevitable degradation in too large families with insufficient income.

There is rapidly coming into existence a new code of morals in respect to family planning. Thoughtful people are already convinced that genuine Christian solicitude for humanity will lead to a rational control of the birth rate. Such an attitude should have its effect in two important directions. On the one hand, ways must be found of restraining the improvident and defective from bringing into existence children who cannot have a good physical inheritance or humane care. On the other hand, those who are abundantly able, physically and financially, to give to children a

good home ought to take their responsibilities in this matter more seriously. It has been difficult in the past to speak frankly because the whole subject has been connected with social and ecclesiastical taboos. But the study of genetics has put us in possession of facts unknown two or three generations ago. It is, however, the plain duty of a Christian society to see that those entering into the married state possess the important knowledge as to the conditions under which children may be well born and well cared for during their infancy. The fact that scientific knowledge may be used for wrong purposes is no argument for suppressing it. The obviously moral pathway is to convey that knowledge as part and parcel of a high-minded conception of the meaning and value of human life.

**THE PROBLEM OF DIVORCE.**—Christian doctrine, in its exaltation of the sanctity of marriage, has taken a severely rigid position in the matter of divorce. Undoubtedly, this traditional Christian doctrine is a strong bulwark against the notions of ill-balanced individualists who have small concern for the social consequences of philandering. At the same time, the current sentiment in Christian teaching is based too much on the supposition that the preservation of the marriage contract is always morally better than its dissolution. The one "scriptural" occasion for divorce is commonly recognized; but other equally disastrous circumstances are not permitted to receive as frank consideration. When, for any reason, there has disappeared beyond recall that mutual love which the Christian recognizes as the one sacred reason for marriage, it is impossible

longer to speak of the "sanctity" of a loveless intimacy. A Christian minister would certainly advise against the marriage of people who did not love each other. Shall he insist on the continuance of a marriage in which mutual love and respect have been destroyed and all possible efforts to restore the integrity of the marriage have been in vain?

In this, as in all moral problems, the Christian ideal must be determined by personal rather than by technical considerations. Many a marriage has survived the alleged "scriptural" cause for divorce, simply because there was sufficient Christian love remaining to make forgiveness and reconciliation possible. There are countless instances where Christian devotion has eventually saved what seemed at the time to be hopeless estrangement from leading to an irrevocable separation. The Christian sentiment against divorce is based on the wholesome recognition of the fact that a happy marriage is a matter of continuous moral co-operation. Nevertheless, with the best of intentions, mistakes are made in marriage. Protestantism has generally taken the ground that the best Christian service is to be rendered by frankly recognizing the facts. That divorce actually relieves an intolerable situation in some instances is undeniable. But for those selfishly sought separations which are desired solely for irresponsible individualistic gratification the Christian can have only condemnation. And the Christian minister may well hesitate to remarry anyone who has shown himself to be devoid of moral earnestness in his first alliance. If asked to marry any person who has failed in

a first marriage, he should in the interest of all concerned use necessary means of finding out whether the person in question has repented of the errors or corrected the distorted points of view which may have wrecked the first marriage.

**THE RELIGIOUS RESPONSIBILITY OF PARENTS.**—In former days the father of a Christian family was expected to maintain in the home regular religious exercises. The reading of the Bible, followed by family prayers, was a parental duty. The children were expected to attend church regularly and to be able to discuss with the parents the religious truths there learned. The lasting influence of this distinctly religious training is gratefully acknowledged by countless men and women now in the prime of life. Although many homes have abandoned the formal practices of an earlier time, yet there is also in many a seeking for means suitable to the family of expressing and enhancing its spiritual life. The varied occupations of members of a family make much more difficult than formerly a unified family program; but it is also true that many a young father today would feel ill at ease and artificial in an attempt to conduct family devotions. For the most part, the religious education of children is being turned over too exclusively to the Sunday school and in too many cases is almost or entirely neglected. Even at best the Sunday school cannot take the place of parents or make up for their neglect of the religious education of their children. Neither Christian parents nor teachers can rightly overlook the fact that the home is the first and most effective instrument for religious

training. The home is inevitably in a position to do some things that the Sunday school as an educational force operating mainly in a limited part of a particular day cannot rightly be expected to do. The church school can supplement and extend the work done by the home, and there should be the closest co-operation between the two. Only as the teaching possibilities of the home can be mobilized and parents trained and inspired for their task can the work of religious education be placed on the most secure foundation and individuals and families be prepared for the most complete living.

Christian parents should show as much interest in the new methods of religious training as their parents did in the older methods. They ought to share with their children the experiences of the Sunday school. They ought, unless prevented by clear duties elsewhere, themselves to be identified with the Sunday school, either as teachers or as learners. They ought to engage in frank and friendly conversation about Christian ideals, so that the children may know how deeply concerned the parents are for the prevalence of Christ-like conduct and purposes. The rewards of such sharing of religious education with one's children are great. Where it is lacking, either through carelessness or through false modesty, both children and parents are being deprived of a precious experience.

There is one subject on which information should be given to the child by a parent. This is the knowledge of the way in which children come into the world. Children invariably ask about these matters at an early

age, before they have any particular sex consciousness. It is possible then to answer these questions frankly and reverently, in such a way that the child's first knowledge of sex relations shall be wholesome. To permit this knowledge to be first acquired from the lips of evil-minded or flippant persons is a wrong which no parent should allow.

**THE CHRISTIAN HOME AS A SOCIAL ASSET.**—In former times the members of the family were engaged in a common industrial enterprise. All had a hand in providing food, clothing, tools, furniture, works of art. The home under these circumstances was a most important realm of co-operation. But today the industries have almost all disappeared from the home. The members of the family pursue their daily work away from home, meeting perhaps only at dinner as a family circle. It is very easy, under these circumstances, to permit the family to disintegrate. Home then comes to be only a common roof to shelter heterogeneous individuals.

The Christian family today must seriously plan to create and foster a common social life. There can be a wealth of culture when each one of the various members of the circle contributes to an interested and sympathetic group the story of the human contacts, the struggles and aspirations, and the reflections which grow out of work or companionship. The Christian virtue of brotherliness can most readily and naturally grow in the home circle. Personal love and pride make easy a generous appreciation of the efforts of others. This brotherhood is readily enlarged as the friends of

one or another member of the family are welcomed to the good cheer of a Christian home. Many a lonesome young person away from his own home might be spiritually enriched by the atmosphere of a Christian home which extends a genuine welcome. The importance of such homes as centers of generous and unselfish ideals can scarcely be overestimated.

This is outstandingly true of the influence of the Christian home on students from non-Christian lands. World-mindedness, appreciation of Christian ideals, and friendships which extend across oceans and continents have been fostered by many fine homes which have taken pains to open their doors to students who have later taken positions of great influence in their own lands. On the other hand, some such students have come to Christian lands and gone home again with a wrong conception of our ideals because they have seen much of our life at its worst but have never seen the inside of a Christian home.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is the family so important a social group? Can you think of any other group in which such frank personal relationships exist? Which are more important in making a "happy" family, exact definitions of the status and authority of the members or personal qualities? In what respects are the ideals of Christian living patterned after the relationships in the family?
2. Are we prepared today to say exactly how parental "authority" should be defined and exercised? What changes have recently occurred in the conception of the rights of a wife? Should a bride promise to obey her husband?
3. How does marriage ennoble sex attraction? Why is mere romantic love not a sufficient basis for a happy marriage? How

would you define the moral purpose which should be present in a true marriage?

4. In what way does the sacramental theory exalt marriage? Is marriage a sacrament in Protestantism? Are Protestant marriages less "sacred" than Catholic marriages? What is the moral difference between a true marriage and a temporary alliance?
5. Is the wife usually intrusted with as much responsibility for family finances as she would welcome? Does the modern family take sufficient pains to have common interests? Why are such common interests essential? How does common membership in a church help to make a happy marriage?
6. How do children evoke self-sacrifice and generosity from parents? Are fathers and mothers usually more kindly than those who have no children? In what ways do children furnish compulsory education of parents? Does such education make for better character?
7. What is meant by "the right of a child to be well-born"? Do children in a large family with insufficient income seem to you to be getting their rights? What responsibility does the ideal of birth control place upon parents? Is this ideal compatible with a Christian purpose?
8. Why is divorce usually regarded as a disgrace? Are the reasons usually given for divorce Christian reasons? Why should people not be as free to divorce as they are to marry? What would a Christian regard as a sufficient reason for divorce?
9. Were family prayers customary in your home? Why has family worship so largely disappeared? Are parents fulfilling their religious duty to their children if they send them to Sunday school? What else should a Christian parent do?
10. The old-time authority of "parents is today split up among the teacher, truant officer, priest, judge, factory inspector, play leader, shop foreman, or union business agent." What is the moral effect of this on home life? What moral advantage comes from a home industry in which parents and children can

work together? How do modern industrial and social practices threaten the integrity of the home? In what ways is a Christian home a social asset?

11. What changes have taken place with regard to educational preparation for marriage, premarital medical examinations, premarital interviewing by ministers, seeking an expert counselor in case of marital difficulty?

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS LIFE-WORK

WE INHERIT an aristocratic sentiment concerning work, derived from ancient class distinctions. The "gentleman" until comparatively recent times was a man who did not have to work for a living. The laborer, especially the manual laborer, was patronized because people needed his services, but he was not recognized as eligible to the privileges of the leisure class. A social stigma was thus placed on labor. In America the conditions of pioneer life were such that strenuous labor on the part of everyone was a self-evident good. Thus in the development of this country it has come to be taken for granted that an able-bodied man will want to have some definite profession or occupation. Christianity began as a religion of working people, and it has always recognized the full dignity of the worker. Christian ethics presupposes that every moral individual will wish to be engaged in useful occupation.

WORK CREATES A NEW WORLD.—Man transforms his world through work. Our great cities, our industries, our transportation systems, our specialized education, and our amusements are all the result of work. To an increasing extent the "world" in which we live is largely man made. Our spiritual values must be found

largely in this world. This fact gives rise to the characteristic moral problems of today. The "labor problem" is not simply the technical one of adjusting wages. It is rather the more complicated question of moral responsibilities in a work-created world. How are the goods produced by human labor to be so distributed and so used as to promote the higher life of men?

**THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF VOCATION.**—There is all the difference in the world between "hunting a job" and "choosing a vocation." In the former case the work which one does is primarily a mere means of securing wages. Any other "job" paying equally good wages would be as good. But in a vocation the primary reward is found in the opportunity to do something worth while. A certain university professor, when pitted for the smallness of his salary, replied: "If I were able, I should be glad to pay for the privilege of doing what the university employs me to do." The "dignity of labor" can be maintained only if the laborer can experience an inherent value in his labor. As far as possible, Christian ethics must help men to think of their life-work in terms of vocation. This involves both the cultivation of an inner attitude and the serious attempt so to organize the world of industry as to make work interesting and rewarding.

**DISTINCTIVELY RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS.**—The Roman Catholic church provides certain ways of dedicating one's life entirely to religious activities. The monk or the nun withdraws from ordinary occupations so as to be free to devote all time and energy to the perfection of character and the service of men in religious ways.

The spiritual value of such dedication is apparent; but it also brings its characteristic temptations. If the religious life is too completely separated from normal occupations, faithfulness engenders a kind of intensity and persistence in acts of worship, prayer, and meditation which may, on the one hand, easily lead to morbid states of mind or, on the other, to a careless familiarity with constantly repeated forms. In Protestantism there is no specific calling which is in and of itself peculiarly religious. A Christian purpose may be expressed in any occupation which is worthy of one's capacities and which is so ordered as to keep foremost the ideal of service to one's fellow-men.

**THE IDEAL OF CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.**—The word "minister" has been monopolized by the clergy. But in the literal sense of the word every true Christian is a minister. Jesus made ministry the supreme test of greatness in his Kingdom. Martin Luther suggested to house servants that they could give a genuinely Christian character to their humble duties if they were to remember that they were cleaning the house or cooking the meals for people whom the Lord Jesus loved. The Christian will, of course, be honest and faithful in his daily toil. But he will also bring to it that inner experience of good will which expresses itself in friendly attitudes and kindly intentions in all relations with others. There is nothing more valuable than precisely this spiritualizing of what might otherwise be somewhat sordid relationships.

**THE MINISTRY OF RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP.**—This vocation is rightly highly honored. For that reason it is

often coveted by sentimental persons who have no particular gifts for the task. There is no reason to think that a weak or ignorant man is rendering better Christian service in the ministry than he would be elsewhere. On the contrary, so important is the task of leadership, so dependent on the leader are the rank and file of Christians, that one contemplating the Christian ministry should ask himself in all seriousness whether in character and in education he is worthy of the trust committed to him. Just as we should never for a moment think of intrusting our physical welfare to an incompetent physician, so our spiritual welfare can be promoted only by a minister who is really equipped for his task. Mere sentimental consecration cannot take the place of knowledge and good judgment.

The Christian leader's vocation is to help the spiritual life of those who look to him for leadership. He must so identify himself with the people whom he is to serve that he will not find himself in the unfortunate position of scolding or lecturing a group entirely out of sympathy with him. It is his privilege to make men acquainted with the many-sided inheritance of our Christian tradition so as to reveal the un-Christian character of dogmatism. The well-trained minister, who can thus open for the present generation the book of remembrance, in which during the centuries devoted men and women have given their testimony, will enable the modern Christian to face our world with freedom while at the same time preserving continuity with the past.

**THE CHRISTIAN TEACHER.**—The ministry of the teacher consists in introducing immature persons to the treasures of human culture in such fashion as to enable them to become bearers of culture to their own and to succeeding generations. The teacher, no less than the preacher, should experience a "call." He (or she) must have such a personal love for the culture which is to be interpreted that teaching will be a joy. If the teacher has degraded the task into a "job" where the routine is carried out in order to claim a money reward, irreparable harm is done. Pupils catch the spirit of the teacher and retain its influence longer than anything else. Great emphasis is laid on the duty and the opportunity of teachers in Christian schools to lead the students into a religious life. It is not always recognized that the finest service which a teacher can render is to kindle a genuine love for the things which elevate and inspire, whether these things are conventionally labeled or not. A truly Christian influence may be exercised in secular schools as well as in specifically Christian schools, without ever formally discussing religion at all. If the pupil, by whatever means, be led to love and to covet for himself a Christlike attitude in his relations with the problems and the tasks of life, the Christian teacher has been faithful.

In our day teachers are often faced with one difficult problem. Modern science and historical criticism have corrected many ideas formerly held sacred. The teacher is pledged to seek and to proclaim the truth. The conclusions reached in geology, biology, and history may be contradictory to certain views which some

of the pupils regard as essential to religious faith. The Christian teacher will avoid dogmatizing in such a way as to seem to coerce the consciences of others. He will take the utmost pains to acquaint the pupils with the facts on which conclusions rest so that these conclusions may seem to be reasonable. He will refrain from that species of intellectual cruelty in which brutal men find joy—the deliberate shocking and wounding of sentiment under the delusion that emancipation is better achieved thus than by more reasonable methods. The Christian teacher will, in cases where painful anxiety arises, take pains to point out ways in which the new science may be religiously interpreted. A great service is rendered by a teacher who can instil open-mindedness along with a warm devotion to religious ideals. If more teachers took advantage of this opportunity, many a high-minded young man or woman might be enlisted heartily in Christian living, instead of wandering in perplexity.

**THE CHRISTIAN PHYSICIAN.**—The close relation between physical health and mental health gives to the physician an enviable opportunity to contribute toward the Christian living of his patients. The standards of the medical profession presuppose that the physician will minister to the needs of men instead of exploiting them. This is essentially in harmony with the Christian ideal. The physician is in a position to know some personal secrets which are never disclosed to others. He may often be able, as no one else is, to discover factors which interfere not only with physical welfare, but also with moral integrity. The Christian

physician may most effectually preach the gospel of clean living without using cant phrases or seeming to be unduly pious. The provision for hospitals, the administration of public health, the education of parents to the right of children to be well-born, the understanding of the relationship between physical health and normal appetites and desires, the discovery of the cause and cure of occupational diseases, are some of the enterprises in which physicians must exercise leadership. So prominent is the ideal of ministry in the code of the physician that it may almost be said that his vocational standing may be measured largely in terms of the Christian ideal.

**THE CHRISTIAN LAWYER.**—As civilization becomes more complex, the function of law becomes more complicated. Our modern culture would speedily collapse if there were not some way of enabling right-minded people to know the rules of the game. The lawyer is called upon to help men either to keep out of trouble or to find the best way out of trouble if they have been so foolish or so unfortunate as to have violated the laws. The Christian ideal of ministry is immediately applicable here. The lawyer is trusted by his client as a friend in need. The gospel of good will can be practiced as an essential factor in the lawyer's professional work.

The temptation confronting the lawyer is to let personal favoritism have full sway, so that the interests of the client are ruthlessly forwarded. The Christian lawyer will attempt to make the law further social good will instead of defeating it. He will assist the client to an attitude of fair-mindedness, so that justice may be

done. The Christian lawyer, both in his private practice and in his professional relations, has an extraordinary opportunity to uphold high standards, to promote justice, and to help create the conditions which are indispensable if respect for the law is to prevail.

**CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE REALM OF INDUSTRY.**—In the so-called professions the ideal of ministry is frankly recognized. The "successful" minister or teacher or physician is the man who has rendered largest service because of his special equipment and his interest in human welfare. One can enjoy a high reputation, even if he never becomes rich in his profession. But in the realm of industry, "success" is generally identified with ability to "make money." The Christian businessman is thus compelled to live in a world where competition is not so much for professional reputation as it is for a large income. Moreover, in the complicated web of modern industry personal relations are to a large extent eliminated. The manufacturer does not meet personally the people who eventually consume his goods. The salesman perforce estimates his task in terms of the amount of sales rather than in terms of the welfare of those to whom he sells. The laborer toils under contract or in factories, where he is almost never compelled to think of the persons who will be affected by the quality of his work.

The Christian businessman is therefore confronted with an exceptionally difficult situation. The very impersonal nature of business enterprise largely excludes that direct contact with persons which makes it relatively easy for the minister or teacher or physician to

incorporate Christian good will directly and profitably into the code of the profession. When such good will is incorporated into industrial enterprises, it is likely to be so absorbed into the routine of trade that the "ultimate consumer" does not realize that there has been any such contribution.

But the very impersonal nature of the intricate organization of business opens the door to a moral opportunity of great importance. Men can be protected from exploitation only if the system of business is morally just. The greatest contribution which can be rendered by those who are in a position to shape business practices is to make the system increasingly one under which men are required to render good value in services or in goods in all transactions. Christianity means the practice of good will. But good will in industrial or commercial relations is impossible unless the transactions are carried on under regulations which all may respect and trust. As long as the suspicion exists that exploitation is tolerated, if not encouraged, by business standards, it will be very difficult to carry Christian relationships into the industrial realm.

**THE MORAL PROBLEM OF UNCONGENIAL TASKS.**—Comparatively few persons actually realize the ideal of having freely chosen a vocation. A large portion of the labor essential to human welfare is monotonous and often deadening. But even drudgery is gladly undertaken when it can serve a loved one. The mother is often tied down to an unrelenting routine of house-work, cooking, sewing, nursing, watching, and disciplining the children. But the weary mother is upheld

by the realization that her ministry is indispensable to the welfare of those whom she loves. In the monotonous toil of our highly specialized industry, there is no such immediate personal motive to give to work a spiritual value. Yet all such work is indispensable to humanity. There is need of a social vision which will explicitly correlate the efforts of the toiling millions with the ends which are served by such toil.

When an enterprise is conceived nobly by those who administer it, idealism may be stimulated in all who have a share in the enterprise. The purpose of Christian men in industry will be to organize the system so that the spirit of vocation may be brought into it, that comradeship may be experienced, and responsibility for the common good may characterize all relationships. The Christianizing of industrial relationships constitutes one of the finest areas for dedication, resourcefulness, and courage. It requires social imagination also to hold before us the good of unseen persons whose lives are affected by what we do.

**THE VALUE OF AN AVOCATION.**—Where it is difficult to translate one's daily toil into the conception of a vocation, there is still the possibility of an avocation in which noble aspirations may flourish. An avocation possesses precisely that element of free choice which enters into a vocation. If vocational value cannot be realized in one's daily occupation, an avocation is imperative. Such an avocation may be the rare privilege which too many fathers neglect—the sharing of life with one's children and the rediscovery of the educational significance of study and play. It may take the

form of some sort of active service in a public or a private enterprise for the welfare of man. It may be some form of creative art or some minor undertaking in business or politics. It is imperative, however, that there shall be some phase of life which can be dedicated to the Christian ideal of ministry, if Christian faith and love are to be cultivated. Sometimes an avocation may grow to be one's real vocation. The Christian will endeavor, either by a social interpretation of the place of his work in the total welfare of man, or by the discovery of an avocation, or by both, to cultivate and establish that attitude of good will which redeems industrial life from sordidness and impersonality.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Do people generally like to work? Is it an advantage or a disadvantage to be compelled to "work for a living"? What kind of work do you enjoy? Why do you enjoy it? Would you work if you did not have to? Why? Why was a "gentleman" formerly not expected to work? What has become of the "gentleman" in American life?
2. What end is a man seeking when he is "hunting a job"? What end is a man seeking if he is "choosing a life-work"? Is a "job" a moral asset or a liability? What is usually meant by a "good job"? Define "vocation." Do you think of your life-work as a vocation?
3. What is a "religious vocation" in Catholicism? What makes a vocation religious, according to Protestant standards?
4. It is expected that a man who desires to become a Christian minister must have a "divine call." What is involved in such a "call"? Make out a list of the characteristics which you would like your pastor to possess and arrange them in order of importance.

5. Is teaching a vocation or a "job"? Can religion be "taught"? How would the work of a *Christian* teacher differ from that of a teacher who is not a Christian? The teaching of religion is usually forbidden in the public schools. Can a teacher in such schools fulfil his obligations as a Christian? What religious problems are raised by the study of modern science? Is there an irreligious way of teaching science? How can a Christian teacher of science help the religious life of his students?
6. Physicians "have attainments in special knowledge, and have as a vocation the application of this knowledge for the benefit of others. Reward or financial gain is, as a general rule, a subordinate consideration." Compare this ideal with that of the Christian minister. Why are "medical missions" deemed an essential part of the missionary enterprise? Is it easy for a physician to carry Christian principles into his practice?
7. "The primary duty of a lawyer engaged in public prosecution is not to convict, but to see that justice is done" (Canons of Ethics adopted by the American Bar Association). Does the client usually take as high-minded a view? Ought a Christian to respect the law? To what extent is good will among men dependent upon an administration of law which deserves respect? How would you define the duties of a Christian lawyer?
8. What constitutes a "successful" businessman? Compare the standards of success here with the standards of success in the ministry, or the medical profession. What is the motive which usually leads a man to choose a business career? It is a Christian motive? What is a "business-like method" of carrying out an enterprise? Is such a method morally superior to "unbusiness-like methods"? Are churches usually business-like in their financial transactions? Are the customers in a department store as conscientious as the managers? In selling a business, "good will" is usually reckoned at a definite financial value. Is good will essential to a "good" business?
9. What is drudgery? How is it different from hard work? A somewhat famous sermon a generation ago bore the title "Blessed Be Drudgery." Under what circumstances can

drudgery be blessed? "Money wouldn't hire me to work in that factory." What is wrong when such a statement is made? How would you carry Christian ideals into monotonous labor?

10. What is an avocation? How may an avocation help to create moral idealism? Is Christian service most conspicuously expressed in vocations or in avocations?

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD RECREATION

CHRISTIANITY has taken at some periods a negative attitude toward recreation, although the idea of children and even of old men playing on the streets is a part of the biblical ideal of the Blessed City. The New Testament constantly warns against yielding to worldliness. Asceticism is an exaggerated form of this aloofness from the world. The philosophy of asceticism is simple. Men are led into selfish indulgence because of natural instincts. The ascetic undertakes a rigorous discipline of natural impulses, thinking thereby to free himself from the temptations due to the flesh. Asceticism still has an honored place in Roman Catholicism. In some Protestant bodies a quasi-ascetic theory of morals has prevailed. Puritanism has the reputation of distrusting "doubtful amusements."

There is an element of truth in ascetic conceptions. There are certain kinds of enjoyment in which the Christian may not indulge. But asceticism as such is not a Christian ideal. It is more emphasized in some non-Christian religions than in Christianity.

THE DEMORALIZING CONSEQUENCES OF SEEKING  
NOTHING BUT PLEASURE.—Pleasure comes from allow-

ing the natural impulses to have right of way. But when these impulses are indulged without restraint, they usually require a steadily increasing stimulus in order to produce satisfaction. Thus sheer indulgence of the appetites almost inevitably develops into excess. A man may become a "slave to his appetites." Moreover, a wholesome mind is thinking not so much of pleasure itself as of activities and achievements. Pleasure is a by-product rather than a primary aim. Strictly speaking, we seek objects and situations which arouse pleasurable sentiments rather than mere pleasure.

**CHRISTIANITY IS A RELIGION OF JOY.**—The literature of Christianity abounds in the expression of happiness. The gospel is the "good tidings of great joy." Christians are urged to "rejoice in the Lord." The fruit of the spirit is "love, joy, peace," and the like. The true Christian is a happy person. Nothing could be further from the truth than to suppose that in becoming a Christian one must give up all happiness.

**WHAT BRINGS HAPPINESS TO A PERSON.**—The experience of happiness is dependent to a large extent upon character and training. We "learn to like" a great many things. The right-minded man is surely quite as happy as is the debauchee; but he is happy in a different way. The all-important moral question is not simply whether one is happy but rather what kinds of things make one happy. The Christian test of pleasure is to be found by asking whether the activities which bring enjoyment are compatible with a Christlike attitude.

**THE JOY OF WHOLESOME WORK.**—The happiest persons are not those who live in idleness. They are rather those who are devoted to interesting activity. Most people want to work if only the work can be of such a character as to enable them to develop and express their ideals. We have already discussed the Christian's attitude toward his life-work and have indicated the ways in which the sense of a vocation may make that work a source of satisfaction.

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF FATIGUE.**—Physiologically, happiness depends upon the wholesome and vigorous functioning of the physical organism. In long-continued labor chemical changes take place which affect bodily and mental health. After a prolonged period of concentrated work there is a physiological need of rest and a psychical need of recreation. Such recreation should not be looked upon as a concession to frivolous desires. It should be regarded as a necessary preparation for efficient moral living. Vacations, sports, and amusements are now generally included as essential elements in any well-regulated life. More and more attention is being given to the skilful conduct of forms of recreation. The Christian will definitely plan recreational activities as a means of keeping his life happy and wholesome.

**THE PROBLEM OF COMMERCIALIZED AMUSEMENTS.**—With increased leisure and the quickening tempo of life, commercialized recreation takes an increasingly large place, hence a growing need of choosing wisely and of cultivating discrimination. Many forms of commercialized recreation merely exploit their patrons and

lower standards. Moreover, as expensive and elaborate provision is made, people gain the habit of seeking good times by paying money rather than by drawing upon resources and skills within themselves. Thus they fail to develop skill in creating their own good times together. We need not only to maintain a balance in our recreational experiences but to be sure that we are using them in such a way as to develop our health, to improve our aesthetic tastes, and to gain greater capacity for fellowship and mutual appreciation. We want to use our leisure so that we have a good time and also become better-developed people.

**WHAT KIND OF RECREATION MAY THE CHRISTIAN SEEK?**—Play should release our energies, relieve tensions, develop resourcefulness, promote fellowship, and give added zest to life. The Christian should avoid those kinds of recreation which bring into prominence situations occasioning wrongdoing. Physical health is favorable to good moral character. The Christian, therefore, will avoid forms of dissipation which undermine his health. Lack of self-control is a potent source of wrongdoing. The Christian will avoid such stimulations as lead to a lack of nervous balance or which encourage undue excitement. If these and similar cautions are observed, the Christian may find wholesome recreation in virtually all the current forms of respectable amusement. It has proved to be impossible to make a definite list of things from which the Christian must abstain. While it is questionable whether most offerings of the theater are worth the price, yet Christians today generally regard the theater as a desirable

element in our culture. Dancing is a natural and satisfying form of rhythmic exercise that is finding a constructive place in the educational program of youth. However, it needs the safeguards of good environment, of respect for personality, and of choice of persons who use this form of recreation for aesthetic experience and not for exploitation of others. The problem of amusements cannot be solved by any short and easy method of making lists. A conscientious Christian will soon know whether a given type of recreation has good results on the whole. If life is growing into greater fulness and if the recreation finds a positive place along with Christian ideals, the most important tests have been made.

**THE ACQUIREMENT OF SELF-RELIANCE IN RECREATION.**—Perhaps the greatest moral defect in commercialized amusements is the fact that no initiative need be taken by the person to be amused. The very best kind of recreation is that in which a person may be conscious of voluntary effort. Athletic sports and games of skill are especially valuable in this respect because of the desire to improve over one's past performances or to stand well among one's comrades. Of even greater importance are activities which require teamwork and promote comradeship. Amateur baseball, amateur dramatics, hiking, and camping parties are instances of this social type of recreation. These not only furnish happiness; they also encourage the practice of good will.

**THE INCREASING IMPORTANCE OF RECREATION IN MODERN LIFE.**—To an unfortunate extent the work of

the modern world involves long-continued monotonous labor and confinement within doors. The human organism has been developed in relation to out-of-doors occupations. It becomes physiologically desirable to supplement the kind of labor in which people are typically engaged today with some form of agreeable physical exercise. Many Christian churches are giving attention to group games, and to playgrounds, picnics, vacation schools, and summer assemblies. It is to be expected that Christians will make an appropriate place for good times both in their own lives and in the lives of others.

Quite as important is the need of mental recreation. The specialization of modern industry requires concentration upon some one narrow realm. If we compare the educational value of the work of a factory hand with that of a farmer's boy, the differences are very great. The farmer's boy comes into contact with a surprisingly large number of industrial processes. He learns something about the life and habits of animals and birds. He is able to watch the process of producing goods from the beginning to the time when the goods are sold. The factory worker, on the contrary, may have less chance for broad and varying contacts. It is essential to a wholesome life that one should have agreeable opportunities for discovering what it means to be a citizen of the larger world.

A civilization which requires people in their work and in their homes to relinquish desirable contacts with nature and with social life is under moral obligation to furnish ways in which brighter scenes and more up-

lifting ideals may be contemplated. A growing form of social service is the organization and guidance of groups which will provide both for recreational social life and for the enlargement of ideas and ideals.

**THE PLAY PROBLEM IN CITIES.**—It is one of the sad conditions of modern civilization that thousands of city children have no playground save the hard and dirty streets with the constant perils due to traffic. It is generally recognized today that all cities should provide ample parks for recreation. But such parks as a rule serve the needs only of older people. It has been found by experience that children under ten years of age do not go very far from home for their play. One of the enterprises where Christian sentiment may be active is the matter of providing adequate play space for the children in our towns and cities.

Of even more moral importance is the problem of suitable places where young people may meet and enjoy themselves. The public dance halls, for commercial purposes, have often exploited this need of youth. When one beholds church buildings closed for a large portion of the week, one wonders whether an active Christian imagination might not discover a way of meeting a great problem by providing rooms and halls in which youth might cultivate social life and find wholesome recreation.

**THE TEMPTATION OF EXCESSIVE EXCITEMENT.**—Much of the joy in recreation comes from the thrill of adventure. Play is essentially a release of energy in wholehearted fashion. But the pleasure derived from sport can be intensified by artificial means. One of the

evils connected with sport comes from introducing artificial means of increasing excitement. The thrill caused by competition can be intensified by betting on the result. Such betting may readily become gambling. The gambler, however, has lost interest in the primary values of sport. He uses uncertain events simply as opportunities for a wager. The evil of the gambling appetite is too well recognized to require specific condemnation. The Christian will, of course, keep sports "clean." It is a moral tragedy to permit wholesome recreation to become tributary to the depraved desire for gaming. Other forms of unwholesome excitement which the Christian will seek to eliminate are the use of stimulants and drugs and sensational or "spicy" plays. In all these the emotions are intensely aroused without being related to any wholesome moral activity. The consequence is nervous exhaustion rather than recreation.

#### THE VALUE OF SOCIAL FORMS OF RECREATION.—

The aim of Christian growth is the creating of a spirit of good will toward others. Wholesome recreation provides an especially favorable means of developing this good will. A group of people who go on a hike together will come to feel a kind of friendliness which can come in no other way so quickly and so easily. Of special value are those "old-fashioned" games which involve active co-operation of a large number of people. Promoters of popular recreation are to a large extent using some of the games which were developed by small communities in the past and which embody the spirit of jovial neighborliness. A more ambitious form of this

social co-operation may be worked out in pageants or amateur dramatics, in which the performers and the auditors are brought together in a common social enjoyment. Inasmuch as people in quest of recreation naturally feel in good humor, social forms of recreation are the easy and valuable means of creating and maintaining that spirit of good will which the Christian attempts to carry into all relations. People who have played together will have a kindly spirit and will readily be more friendly in their industrial or social relationships.

The benefits of recreation in homes are coming back into the consciousness of the public. In the family where we must meet responsibilities and bear burdens together we should also cultivate the joys of recreational fellowship. Parents and children who play together are more closely bound together in heart; so also are husbands and wives. It has been well said that families that play together stay together. Moreover, to young people who come up in an atmosphere of good fellowship the ideals of the home will exert a more dynamic and permanent influence upon their lives.

Finally, as we seek something of good cheer and of wholesome recreational fellowship in our own lives and for our homes we should seek also to safeguard and extend these opportunities for all families, creating homes and environmental conditions in cities, villages, and rural areas in which provision will be made for good times in the family circle. This requires better housing and better community planning, which should be perennial interests in a democratic civilization.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is asceticism? What virtues would an ascetic place first? Why has "worldliness" been condemned by Christian preachers?
2. Do people who have nothing to do except to "have a good time" seem to you to be happier than those who have to work? It has been said that "to get happiness one must forget it." In what sense is this true?
3. Are Christians usually happy? Why is it so often assumed that one must "give up" important pleasures in order to become a Christian?
4. What are the things which give you the most pleasure? Do you "naturally" like these things, or did you learn to like some of them? What would be a Christian test of pleasure?
5. Do you like the work which you have to do? If so, why? If not, why not? "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Why? "Fatigue is, therefore, not merely physically uncomfortable; it is intellectually and morally dangerous, and it makes temptations possible that have cost many a man his character." How may the evils of fatigue be overcome? Is a vacation a moral necessity? What good does a vacation do one?
6. What is dissipation? How does it differ from amusement? What are "commercialized amusements"? What amusements of this kind are there in your home town? Do you think the amusements thus provided are really satisfactory? Half a century ago many Christians felt that it was wrong to go to a circus. Would you feel that way? How do you account for the change of sentiment? Would it perplex you to see your pastor attending a circus?
7. Is dancing inherently wrong? What has given public dance halls a bad name? What kind of theatrical performances are given in your home town? Would attendance at these tend to

create a more wholesome attitude toward life? How may a Christian determine whether he should go to the theater or not?

8. In a list of recreations made by experts, out-of-door games like golf or tennis stood highest in value, and motion pictures stood lowest. Would you agree with this valuation? Why is the demand for recreation so much more imperative in the city than in the country?
9. Why is it important that "professionalism" shall be kept out of college athletics? What is the harm in betting on games? How can sports be kept "clean"?
10. What kind of moral discipline is promoted by participation in a baseball game? What is the value of "teamwork"? Is good will promoted by hiking or camping or playing together? Should such forms of recreation have a place in the program of a Christian church?

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## CHAPTER XV

### THE CHRISTIAN AND HIS POSSESSIONS

CHRISTIAN teaching has from the very first warned men against the seductive power of riches. Jesus said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. It is easy to see why such unfavorable judgments are passed on the possession of riches. Those who have an abundance of this world's goods are likely to find their satisfactions in material comforts; and the indulgence in such comforts inevitably begets selfishness. Those who are poorer are often looked down upon with an attitude of benevolent patronage. If riches be made the supreme end of life, vulgarity is almost inevitable. If a person is so dependent on material possessions for his happiness that he stakes all on acquiring a competence, he inevitably puts the interests of the Kingdom in the second place.

THE MORAL VALUE OF OWNERSHIP.—If, however, we attempt to imagine a regime in which private property should be abolished, we immediately discover certain values in personal ownership. It is a source of profound satisfaction to be able to use one's own tools, to read one's own books, to live in one's own house. Moreover, ownership brings a sense of responsibility

which it is difficult to secure in any other way. One will take much better care of a house which he owns than he will of a house which he rents. A person really cares for his own property. He is likely to exploit what is not his. At the same time, not all wealth passes into private hands. The public needs require community ownership of highways, public buildings, parks, and the like. Private property is always subject to the public welfare. The state may "condemn" property needed for public purposes if the owner is unwilling to sell. The moral right of ownership is thus conditioned on the general welfare.

**How Is OWNERSHIP SECURED?**—In the ruder stages of human development, the law of the powerful often prevails. Desirable resources are seized by those who are strong enough to take and hold them. The periods of exploration and discovery have been times when individuals by the sheer fact of prior occupation claimed ownership to land. But property does not remain in the hands of those who first acquire it. It is transferred sooner or later to other hands. Much of it is inherited. Thus in the course of time some property-owners enjoy the exclusive use of their possessions without having done anything to deserve this reward. A question which should receive more attention than is usually given to it is the moral right of a person to property which he inherits and which thus comes to him as a form of good luck. In addition to inheritance, various elements of good and bad fortune play their part in the acquiring of possessions. The mere fact of legal ownership does not guarantee that the owner has a moral

right to what he possesses, in the sense that he has done something to deserve it.

**THE TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF STEWARDSHIP.**—During the Middle Ages the Christian idea of property was formulated in the doctrine of stewardship. It was believed that when God originally created the world there was no such thing as private property. Resources were free to all mankind as the air is today. If mankind had not sinned, that ideal state of primitive communism would have continued. But after the fall of man selfishness made its appearance. Some individuals attempted to seize and monopolize the resources which ought to belong to all. The institution of private property with its system of legal protection was held to be divinely instituted in order to prevent selfishness from destroying mankind.

According to this medieval theory, those who owned property were to remember that their possession rested upon a divine ordinance. They were, therefore, under obligation to administer their property, knowing that they must give account of their stewardship to God. Now God originally intended that all men should enjoy the earth and its fruits. Those who have property, therefore, should be eager to give to those who are in want. Charity was a primary virtue; it was an attempt to introduce into the present inequalities of society something of the universal justice embodied in God's original creation. The place which charity has had in the list of Christian virtues is very conspicuous.

**THE MORAL LIMITATIONS OF THE CONCEPTION OF STEWARDSHIP.**—The conception which has just been

expounded rests on the presupposition that one's possessions are due to a providential dispensation. But as a matter of fact this is a very artificial way of interpreting the matter. We inevitably think of the human and technical factors in the acquiring of wealth. The mere fact that a man is rich cannot be taken without further question as evidence of special divine favor. If he has obtained his wealth by extortion or sharp dealing or speculation, he can scarcely make good his moral defects by merely giving away part of his possessions in charity. Nor is society content to leave property rights to the religious consciousness of the individual. Searching questions are being asked about the man-made rules under which property may be acquired and held. The idea that God is responsible for the present maldistribution of economic resources is untenable.

**THE DOCTRINE OF TITHING.**—A prevalent form of the ideal of stewardship is the doctrine of tithing. This is doubtless of value in suggesting that the Christian is under obligation to make some conscientious and generous disposal of at least a part of what he possesses. But the distinction between one-tenth given to the Lord and nine-tenths reserved for private use is one which can scarcely be carried out satisfactorily. Consider what tithing would involve in the case of the father of a large family whose income is two thousand dollars, as compared with what it would involve in the case of a bachelor whose income is two hundred thousand. The two hundred dollars given by the first would represent a heroic degree of sacrifice and devotion,

while the twenty thousand dollars of the wealthy bachelor would scarcely be missed.

**THERE IS NO FINALLY DETERMINED DOCTRINE OF PROPERTY.**—Sensitiveness to property rights leads men to attribute a sanctity to those regulations which are in their favor. But the history of human development indicates that property regulations are the result of experiment and evolution. The Christian ought to be prepared to contemplate changes in existing standards which will actually make for a higher degree of human welfare. In our own day the enormous inequalities in personal possessions are compelling people to ask serious questions concerning the moral adequacy of our present system of property rights. It is probable that there will be a growing tendency to place definite limitations on private ownership. Wherever such ownership is so used as to lay unjust tribute on the public, modifications are sure to be demanded.

**WHO OWNS THE NATURAL RESOURCES?**—Ultimately all wealth is derived from natural resources either in the form of raw materials or through the transformation of these materials into serviceable products. The natural resources of a country—its coal, its timber, its water power, and the like—are indispensable to the welfare of inhabitants. The law of the mighty has determined the ownership of many of these natural resources. So strong is the feeling that property rights are sacred that any proposal to take these rights out of private hands and to administer them for the public is sure to meet with vigorous objection. At the same time the question continues to be asked with increasing in-

sistence: "Who owns the natural resources of the earth?" What moral right has any one individual or any small group of individuals to levy tribute on others because of an alleged private possession of resources which the individual did not create?

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROPERTY AND PRODUCTIVE LABOR.**—Most of the possessions of our modern world are due to productive labor. In simple cases, as when a man raises a crop, it is easy to see the relationship between such labor and possession. But in our modern life many of the most important forms of property are due to the working of a complex system of co-operative investment and production. Instead of owning a factory, an individual owns a share in a corporation. Just what moral rights and duties are connected with the share of stock which he possesses? If he is thinking of it purely as a means of increasing his personal wealth, his influence is entirely on the side of exploitation. A Christian conscience must insist that ownership shall mean the purpose so to use the possession that mankind shall be the better and not the worse because of it. Ideally, an investment should be made as a personal stake of the individual in some service which can be rendered to humanity by the enterprise in which he invests.

**THE GROWTH OF NEW RESPONSIBILITY.**—One of the significant traits of modern life is the increasing number of successful businessmen who are courageously working out Christian ideals in the matter of personal possessions. Many men of means devote their best energies to the administration and promotion of philan-

thropic enterprises. An increasing number of significant experiments are being made in the administration of property in such fashion as to make of an industry a co-operative community promoting what are virtually Christian ideals. The stories of the struggles of some of these men against un-Christian situations and the conspicuous successes which they have won are among the most interesting features of modern life. The traditional ideal of charity is being rapidly transformed in our day into the conception of such an administration and use of possessions as will promote that spirit of mutual trust and co-operation toward which Christianity has always looked.

**A MORE EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.**—The Christian property-owner realizes the benefits which come from ownership. The Christian spirit leads to the desire that as many persons as possible shall enjoy this enrichment of life. This ideal occasionally finds expression in the conviction that some form of collective ownership should supplant the present system. The co-operative organization of business has been making great strides, and even in the more conservatively organized business establishments there is an increasing spread of ownership by plans of stock dividends paid to employees. The Christian will have small patience with those who extol the advantages of private ownership but steadily plan to keep that ownership in the hands of a very few. It cannot be denied that the possession of property gives power to the possessor. And when power is monopolized by the few, it is exceedingly difficult for the many to obtain their

rights. A broader and more equitable distribution of wealth will be insisted on by the Christian conscience. But the Christian ideal cannot be identified with any particular scheme. It is of more importance to encourage all constructive experiments looking to the establishment of more just conditions.

**SOME CHRISTIAN USES OF PROPERTY.**—The conception of stewardship should be broadened to mean that whatever possessions a Christian may control must be so used as to promote good will among men. The Christian will heartily support those enterprises which make possible a better life on the part of struggling humanity. Benevolences are always imperatively needed to relieve misfortune or to help people to better conditions of living. Investments will be made by the true Christian, not exclusively for the sake of the financial return, but quite as much for the sake of promoting some industry which enriches human life. Those who have the responsibilities of wealth can exert great power for good if they will use it with social vision and with a determination to make the means of life and the opportunity for culture as widely available as possible.

**TRAINING FOR EFFICIENT SPENDING.**—The family has the problem not only of a sufficient income but of using that income in such a way that it will best provide the goods and services needed. The wise use of income is as important as the gaining of it. We use our best thought in solving our other problems, why not an ideal of well-planned and artistic use of money? Yet people are trained to earn, with surprisingly little training for wise spending. The Christian should de-

velop spending habits that will aid in advancing the true values of life. He should base his purchases on definite information as to quality and values of goods. Moreover, he should make best use of the goods purchased, from an individual, a family, and a social point of view. We work so hard to earn our money that it is most regrettable not to make the best use of it. Moreover, the value of money is determined largely by what we buy with it. Dollars devoted to selfish, small, or futile ends are selfish, small, and futile and lead only to real poverty, no matter how many of them are secured. The family is rich only when it has security, contentment, and enough material provision to enable it to pursue the high ends of existence.

**THE MORAL VALUE OF BUDGETING.**—Budgeting means spending by plan rather than by impulse. It helps to eliminate expenditures which are unnecessary or unwise under the circumstances and to use money for things which will best advance the sum total of interests of the individual or family. When expenditures exceed income, trouble and worry begin. But sometimes, even when the books balance, the use of money has still been careless and incompetent. The budget not only sets up danger signs to mark the highway of wise living but also provides "go ahead" signals in the direction of releasing the power which money represents for the achieving of well-chosen ends. The careless spending of money is almost inevitably without moral value. But such ill-considered expenditure is fatally easy unless one is fortified against it by some definite plan. Every Christian ought to make some

kind of a budget to regulate his expenditures. He should thoughtfully determine just what are the objects for which he should plan and definitely formulate his obligations to these. He can thus be sure that he will spend his money on the things which he morally approves. The economies which may be necessary will then be undertaken for the sake of loyalty to some worthy end. Otherwise they come as irksome and unwelcome incidents. If the individual has a surplus, the making of a budget will give opportunity for genuinely Christian planning as to the disposal of that surplus.

**INTANGIBLE POSSESSIONS.**—Some of the most precious possessions are in the spiritual realm. There are some things that riches cannot buy—an honorable name, friends, culture, character. These can be earned only by moral and spiritual qualifications. While some individuals are naturally endowed with greater gifts in this realm than others, it is possible for all to strive to attain them. The traditional Christian depreciation of riches is really the obverse side of an exaltation of those treasures which riches cannot buy. The true Christian can gain joy and satisfaction in life, even if he does not command those material possessions which are commonly supposed to be essential to success. The latter belong to the "things that perish," while spiritual possessions are eternal in value.

**THE SOCIAL CONCEPTION OF THE USE OF POSSESSIONS.**—Whether the Christian's possessions be material or spiritual, he will so use them as to make possible the sharing of benefits by as many people as possible. In the case of material possessions, charity has been the

usual way of sharing with others. But the virtue of such charity depends on the spirit in which it is given. "The gift without the giver is bare." Inasmuch as in our complex civilization the income which makes possible material possessions is almost inevitably secured through the co-operation of many persons in industry, socially minded persons are more concerned to reorganize industry so as to give to all concerned a real share in constructive enterprises than they are to continue indefinitely a plan of temporary relief through charity. The finest possible use of material possessions is to promote experiments toward industrial co-operation, in the hope of establishing a real fellowship among those whose efforts are essential to the creation of a better world.

The sharing of intangible possessions is less complicated. For the most part it consists in straightforward Christian behavior toward others. A cheery disposition helps everybody to feel more kindly. Knowledge can be generously shared. Skill can be put at the disposal of others. High ideals are contagious. Good will really means sharing life with others. In this day when programs and surveys are assuming so much importance, it is well to remind ourselves that the spiritual dynamic in any program must be found in the personal attitude of those who administer it. Without the desire to share ideals, the best-planned scheme is likely to fail. Where good will abounds, even badly organized social plans may be used to create neighborliness and devotion, but good will should as rapidly as possible be implemented by good method. The Christian's most important con-

tribution to the welfare of humanity is not so much the money that he gives away or the completeness of his social program; it is rather that unfailing spirit of good will which is engendered in him by Christian discipleship and which is indispensable to give moral value to all outer deeds.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does a "trust in riches" tend to undermine character? What are the moral standards of a person who believes that "everybody has his price"? Is idleness any more defensible in a rich person than in a tramp?
2. Would you prefer a town where people own their homes or a town where people rent their dwellings? Which is usually more efficiently conducted, private business or municipal business? Would it make for public welfare if the city parks were sold to private owners? Is property an absolute right? Why does the state have the power to "condemn" private property? Who assumes responsibility for publicly owned property?
3. Land was sold to homesteaders after the Civil War for \$1.25 an acre. How much is such land worth now? What did the owners do to be entitled to the increased value? What moral right has a person to money which he inherits? "We fear to pauperize by giving aid to the poor unless we can provide some form of self-help. But in its treatment of the rich, society is not solicitous. Our provisions for inheritance of property undoubtedly pauperize a certain proportion of those who inherit." Is this comparison sound?
4. What does the word "stewardship" mean? Can we expect people to think of their possessions as a trust conferred by God? If you were to trace the origin of a person's possessions, would you give such a theological explanation? Does the doctrine of stewardship sufficiently recognize the rights of others than the "steward"?

5. Have property rights remained unchanged in human history? Are present regulations entirely satisfactory? What reasons are urged for the "nationalization" of natural resources, like coal, water power, and the like? Why are navigable rivers not privately owned? Would the traditional doctrine of stewardship help to determine whether natural resources should be privately or publicly owned?
6. What moral value is there in a possession which one has earned? Is a man's income today a reliable measure of the service he has rendered? Would it be morally desirable that this should be so? Will a Christian be willing to receive income without rendering service? How can a person who does not have to work for a living attain a moral right to his income?
7. "Luxury is better than simplicity if it can be the luxury of *all*. If not, it means selfishness, callousness, and broken bands of brotherhood." What restriction on luxury would this ideal impose? Does the statement represent a Christian ideal?
8. What is the moral value of a budget? Do you make a budget? If not, how can you tell whether you are spending your money in ways which your moral judgment approves? What is the moral effect of requiring a wife or a child always to ask for money? Should there be a family budget, with "allowances" for every individual? How would this help develop a sense of responsibility?
9. Which places a person higher in the opinion of other men, his material or his intangible possessions? What is the relation between Christian devotion and intangible possessions?
10. Is it easier to share "spiritual gifts" than it is to share material possessions? Is there any danger of "pauperizing" people with whom we share education, culture, or enthusiasm for high ideals?

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## CHAPTER XVI

### THE CHRISTIAN AND INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS

QUESTIONS of a fair return for labor and a fair price for goods take on a different aspect today from that which they had under more simple conditions, and they differ in rural and industrial communities. Ancient industrial ethics as reflected in the New Testament is an ethics of paternalism. This is inadequate for today. In ancient industrial ethics the responsibility for moral regulations was laid upon the masters or lords of estates. Paternalistic class ethics assumed that God had given to the master or the lord the authority which he exercised and that God would hold him responsible for the manner in which he administered his trust. Yet the New Testament contains a root for the growth of democracy in the high value which it sets on human personality. Such a reverence for the value of personality gives us inspiration to tackle the difficult problems of modern specialized industry, and it is to be remembered that in the enthusiasm which arose at the beginning of Christianity there was a unique desire of members of the little group to share their goods.

THE DOCTRINE OF STEWARDSHIP.—The paternalistic system found ethical expression in the doctrine of stewardship. According to this doctrine, whatever author-

ity or privilege one holds is derived from God. The king rules by divine right; the master is appointed over the servant. A religious man will acknowledge the divine source of his privileged position and will regard himself as a trustee. The ruler in politics and the master in industry regard themselves as agents of God, and they are to exercise their authority in such fashion as to glorify God. The very fact that others are entirely dependent on the good will of the master for their welfare makes it especially imperative that he be conscientious. In an autocratic industrial system the doctrine of stewardship calls for genuine moral restraint, protesting against the assumption on which many rulers both in politics and in industry have ruled, namely, that the people existed for their benefit.

**OUR MODERN INDUSTRIAL SYSTEM IS MAN-MADE.**—The assumption that every man's plight or condition is a direct result of providential arrangement is modified by facts which everyone can see for himself. Modern industrial organization is a human creation. We can name the men who invented the machines, shaped the methods of manufacture, worked out the practices of salesmanship, and organized great corporations to control manufacture and sale. When anything goes wrong we complain to some human agent, and we expect the wrong to be righted by human beings. The Christian way of righting wrongs is a way of mutual agreement and not of dictated settlement however benevolent. When industrial conditions remained substantially the same from generation to generation, it was natural to think of them as providentially appointed, but today

we are aware of the power of human endeavor to change the world. Instead of piously repeating the text, "The poor ye have with you always," we recognize that we have a chance to abolish poverty, to use productive resources to supply the needs of all, and to use the vast new creative potentialities of modern industry and agriculture for a higher type of human living. Instead of encouraging owners of wealth to assume that they are especially favored by God, investigators are pointing out the precise ways in which wealth and power come into the hands of individuals, including profiteering in wartime. We cannot boast of human achievement in bringing about great increase of power over material things without raising the question why human ingenuity backed by moral earnestness does not work out the changes necessary to a higher level of human well-being.

Such changes will require a more drastic application of the principles of Christian living than we have been accustomed to assume. The necessity of education of the human spirit in the direction of working out the problems of welfare at every point is evident if we are to get the world out of its present welter of hatred, violence, and mutual destruction. This calls for higher motives than personal acquisitiveness. As long as the industrial activity of mankind is treated primarily as a means to the artificial end of financial gain, industry, which ought to be a lordly power for good, will be a battleground of destructive forces. The evils of the industrial system are man made and can be corrected by man.

THE ELIMINATION OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS IN MODERN INDUSTRY.—Before the industrial revolution, industry was carried on for the most part in small establishments where employers and employees knew one another closely and shared the same life. Moreover, when goods were made by hand, it was not difficult to ascertain approximately what was a "fair price" for a commodity. But the characteristics of modern industry are unequal access to raw materials, large-scale production, creation of corporations, absentee ownership, and world-wide markets. Both raw materials and world-markets are sought with such deadly intensity that the industrial process itself is partly frustrated.

Capital for peacetime industry is secured by inducing many people to invest their savings in return for shares of stock, which represent hopes of profit in the enterprise. In a technical sense the stockholder becomes part-owner in the business. But his investment is not usually made because of any personal interest in the enterprise. Almost the sole consideration is the hope of profit. It does not usually occur to the investor to raise the question of stewardship, save as he demands that the managers of the enterprise shall earn dividends.

Since the conduct of the industry is placed in the hands of expert managers, the primary obligation of the manager is to show a profit. And profits are impersonal. They are tabulated by accountants. The business is scrutinized on the basis of financial reports, and the human beings in the process are valued in

terms of their economic product. Managers could function equally well, however, in a more democratic organization of industry, in which they would serve the people more widely and not merely a small group of owners.

#### IMPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE NOT FAVORABLE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FEELING OF OBLIGATION.

—When master-craftsmen and apprentices worked at a common task, loyalties and enthusiasms could be developed. But the modern worker finds it harder to feel enthusiasm for the impersonal industry which employs him. Morale can be created under these circumstances only by the deliberate introduction of personal relationships wherever possible and by the organization of the "rules of the game" so as to make possible a moral respect for the system. When work loses zest and meaning in its own right, something serious happens to the worker. It is therefore evident that in order to get back a sense of meaning the modern worker must have more of a stake in the enterprise and must be educated to see the human significance of his work. As plant, method, and scope of industry have expanded enormously, we need a corresponding expansion of outlook and of sympathy on the part of all concerned. The human meanings are still there, but they are less tangible. The broadening of relationships need not result in a loss of the sense of human significance but may issue in a larger awareness of the interdependence of people everywhere in their industrial efforts. In some cases attention is now being given in some of the foremost business enterprises to the working-out of an "organiza-

tion" in which everyone from the managers to the humblest employee shall have a sense of co-operative endeavor. Yet the general tendency is to rate the excellence of a business in terms of money profit.

**THE INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY.**—The preindustrial community was usually a town or village with a long cultural history. Churches were in existence to welcome every new babe and see that he received a religious training. There was a real community life with a long historic background of general interests and culture. The modern industrial community, on the other hand, is brought together for purely economic reasons. A factory or a group of factories is located in some place convenient for manufacturing and trade. In order to be successful, the factory must have an adequate supply of workers. When these come together, they leave behind the old traditions, the familiar churches, and frequently their home life. They find such habitations as are available conveniently near to the factory. It frequently assumes no responsibility for the housing or the culture of the workers. The new community has a chief common reason for its existence—the economic reason. Labor organizations with definite promises receive some of the devotion which the churches would naturally claim in the older communities. The industrial community tends to become materialistic and class conscious. The employers and managers usually live by themselves in a different community. Protestant churches seem to thrive best in regions where the more wealthy live, and it is easily assumed that they are more in sympathy with the profit-

making aspirations of the wealthy than with the troubles and needs of the workers. The efforts of the churches to "reach the masses" are often ignored or resented as an evidence of a patronizing spirit. The industrial community thus is a potent source of distrust and cynicism. It constitutes a real moral problem; and the problem is largely due to the fact that these communities are created solely for economic reasons.

**THE AMBITIONS OF WAGE-EARNERS.**—In a broad sense the modern wage-earner wants an opportunity to have some voice in the industrial enterprise in which he is engaged. The industry in behalf of which he works was located and built without consulting him. If conditions are disagreeable, insanitary, or dangerous, he must perforce put up with them. The amount of wages paid to him is determined by forces out of his control. He observes a sharp contrast between the standards of living enjoyed by the "moneyed class" and those which his own income permits. He wants a "living wage," with increased comfort and dignity for himself and his family.

**THERE IS NO ACADEMIC SOLUTION OF INDUSTRIAL PROBLEMS.**—There is one inexorable condition which imposes itself upon all efforts to bring improvement into industrial relations. That condition is set by economic survival. An industrial enterprise has value only as it keeps going. It is this fact that makes the moral reform of the industrial system so complicated. The task of reconstructing industrial practices is like the task of reconstructing a great railway terminal. It would be a comparatively simple thing merely to tear

down the old structure and build a new one. The more difficult thing is to keep all trains running and all passengers accommodated day by day while the reconstruction is going on. In any industrial reform industry must be kept going, or there will be nothing left to reform.

**THERE IS NO DOCTRINAIRE CHRISTIAN SOLUTION.**—The Christian spirit of brotherhood must find new ways of vital expression even in the midst of the impersonal relationships which mark so much of modern industry. After all, corporations, shares of stock, and financial reports have their meaning with reference to human needs and activities, and they can be made subservient to human well-being. And if it is puzzling to know how a successful salesman can be a brother to the manager who expects him to get results and to the people whom he persuades to buy and just what brotherhood requires when the quality and price of goods which he sells are both fixed by decisions totally out of his control, yet the meaning of Christian brotherhood must be found in the midst of whatever relationships the situation presents. Given enough power of moral intention, the ingenuity which creates such efficient systems of production and distribution can adjust these systems more satisfactorily to the good of all concerned.

**WHAT, THEN, CAN A CHRISTIAN DO?**—Since the ruling motive in so much industrial and economic thinking is financial profit, the first step in moral improvement is to secure currency for higher motives. It is the genius of Christianity to emphasize and develop the values of loyalty and co-operation even in the presence

of unfavorable conditions. The modern world is not the first to offer difficult moral problems for Christianity to solve. Religion creates the will to subordinate the system to human good. Christianity has repeatedly produced individuals and groups who have carried a true sense of values into the relationships of the economic world.

When once the prevalent habit of measuring success by money standards is challenged, the foundations will be laid for better moral achievement in the industrial order. Indeed, we have only to carry over into industry standards already established in other realms. A government official who attempts to use his position to enrich himself is rightly held up to public scorn. Social service, not private gain, is expected of him. The reputation of a minister, a teacher, or a physician depends upon the service which he renders rather than on the income he enjoys. There is no *a priori* reason for assuming that the ideals of a Christian in business must necessarily be lower than those of a Christian in a profession or in public service. Many Christian persons are seeking the highest ideals in their business, assuming that there is no antipathy between idealism and good sense. But there are not enough of these persons to raise the burden of frightful economic maladjustment and misery which weighs down great numbers of people. The Christian spirit points the way, but Christian people need to dedicate themselves definitely to the cause of economic betterment in order to bring good will among men and glory to God through the common work of mankind.

The archbishops<sup>1</sup> of Canterbury and York, representing the Church of England, Cardinal Hinsley, representing the Catholic church in Britain, and Rev. Walter Armstrong, representing the Free Church Federal Council in Britain united in setting forth five standards by which economic situations and proposals may be tested as follows:

1. Extreme inequality in wealth and possessions should be abolished.
2. Every child, regardless of race or class, should have equal opportunities of education, suitable for the development of his peculiar capacities.
3. The family as a social unit must be safeguarded.
4. The sense of a divine vocation must be restored to man's daily work.
5. The resources of the earth should be used as God's gifts to the whole human race, with due consideration for the needs of the present and future generations.

**ARE THE RULES OF THE GAME FAIR?**—Adjustments must inevitably be made in some of the methods which prevail in the system. If regulations are unjust, personal relationships cannot remove the difficulty unless they look toward the alteration of the offending rules. The standards of remuneration for favored officials and agents in an enterprise are often set at what seems to an outsider an absurdly high rate as contrasted with the salaries or wages of the no less essential employee. On the other side, the minute regulations in some of the craft unions, while intended to benefit individual workmen, seem shortsighted from the point of view of benefiting all workers and the public.

<sup>1</sup> "Foundations of Peace," *London Times*, December 21, 1940.

As long as money income or power to extort financial returns is regarded as the supreme test of success in business, the rules of the game will be formulated primarily for the benefit of those who make them. So rapid has been the development of modern industry that many of the rules are admittedly crude. Some of them preserve from former codes practices which in the new situation are unjustifiable. The Christian cannot acquiesce in any system which ignores fundamental ideals of justice.

**THE INTRODUCTION OF MORE DEMOCRATIC METHODS OF DETERMINING THE RULES OF THE GAME.**—Many of the occasions of friction and ill feeling in industry are due to the fact that the workers have had no voice in determining the conditions under which they work. The influence of the old paternalistic ethics is still strong. It is assumed that the "master" has the right and duty of planning and directing and that the "servant" must always be loyal to what the master has planned. In pursuance of this paternalistic policy, an enterprise is usually so fully organized from above that the employees can gain a hearing only by seeming to obstruct the administration. Some zealously defend the profit motive as a valuable thing for human nature and then organize industry in such a way that the great majority of those engaged in it cannot possibly get any of the profits. If the workers feel that they are not receiving their due share of wealth produced, their usual redress is to protest and to insist on collective bargaining. They often know that huge profits are being made by the managers and stockholders. In a

number of cases the managers of a business have adopted the policy of giving the employees access to the facts and throwing on them partial responsibility for determining what a fair apportionment of the profits would be. In rare cases workers are combining to initiate industrial activity and are employing the capital which they need.

It is universally conceded that the loyalty of employees is an indispensable asset to a business, yet many features in industry make this loyalty difficult. Production is a joint undertaking in which the stake of the workers needs more definite recognition. If industry is to develop a morale which can be cordially supported by the Christian conscience, a greatly increased democratic participation must be worked out. The Malvern Conference, held by a group of British churchmen under the chairmanship of the archbishop of York in Malvern, England, January 7-10, 1941, held that the "status<sup>2</sup> of man as man must find expression in the managerial framework of industry; and that the rights of labor must be recognized as in principle equal to those of capital in the control of industry whatever the means by which this transformation is effected."

While industry as such demands profits, culture requires that industry shall be conducted as a part of the process of producing better people and a better society, and Christianity requires that the methods of industry shall be compatible with love and brotherhood and with the assumption that people are children of God.

<sup>2</sup> *Information Service* (Federal Council of Churches, March 1, 1941), p. 2.

These are high principles, but the results of their neglect and violation have been such as to demonstrate the need of such principles. An encouraging development is the procedure of conducting small, informal conferences in which, without publicity, carefully selected religious leaders, employers, labor representatives, co-operators, and farmers meet around a table for an evening of acquaintance and unhurried fellowship. Results of some such conferences have been quite striking. Such meetings for acquaintance and seeing the point of view of others might well be a normal part of the Christian approach to economic problems.

**A MORE JUST DISTRIBUTION OF COSTS AND PROFITS.**—Business should assume the risks which inevitably attend it. Insurance against accident, occupational disease, or unemployment is the practical carrying-out of the Christian principle that men should bear one another's burdens. The unusual costs of industry should not be saddled on a few families but should be borne by the larger group. This will prevent the falling of crushing burdens on a few shoulders.

Old age pensions have become a necessary feature in our modern situation because so many workers have no adequate chance to save for this period, and especially so since industry begins to scrap workers at a comparatively early age. Widows' pensions are both more humane and more efficient than the earlier ways of caring for children in orphan asylums. A pension makes it possible for the widow to keep her family together and to give children a more normal training than they should otherwise get. These social costs are a part of

the process of living and should be borne by a humane and responsible community. Profit-sharing plans worked out in various ways give workers a sense of having a share in the business. The ideal of sharing profits applies to consumers as well as to proprietors and workers. The precise ways in which this ideal will be worked out must be determined by experiment and study. What we want, after all, is a society favorable to the life of all families and to the development of all children.

**THE IDEAL OF CO-OPERATION MUST DISPLACE THAT OF CONFLICT.**—Christian ethics calls for the spirit of good will in all relations. Such a spirit may be developed if everyone is considerate. The game itself, when we stop to think of the meaning of the social process, is to create a society to which the individual can have satisfactory and stimulating relationships. The Christian should strive to promote good will in every way and should avoid all ways which lead to distrust and conflict. The most complete economic expression of the co-operative spirit is in the co-operative organization of production and distribution. Producer co-operatives are enterprises which are owned and managed by those who work in them. These have not made much progress. Marketing co-operatives are made up of producers, usually farmers, who combine for more effective marketing of their goods. But co-operatives are more fully developed in distribution than in production. In this case distributors and consumers are the same, and the mutual-service motive comes in to displace the profit motive. We need further experi-

ment in the direction of self-organized and self-directed producing groups and co-operative consuming groups where the motive of exploitation is automatically eliminated and the values of mutual service are experienced. The basic theory of Christianity is in family terms. In the family the strong do not grasp. They serve and thereby derive greater satisfaction. In society it is better to create a co-operating group of comrades than to rule over a company of subjects. The broad sharing of wealth is essential to democracy.

**PROTECTION OF THE WEAK AGAINST EXPLOITATION.**—Exploitation and democracy are mutually destructive, while to Christianity exploitation is abhorrent. It is possible, however, to find many persons who are obliged to work even when wages are excessively low. Thus it may come about that women, children, and men are employed at wages which are not sufficient to maintain health and self-respect. Christian sentiment may be counted on to reinforce all movements to eliminate child labor, to regulate hours and conditions of work for women, and to secure a just remuneration for workers. This is necessary in order that family life may be safeguarded. When we realize how important in the spiritual culture of a child is the influence of a good home, we perceive the damage done when mothers bear such burdens in the industrial world that homemaking suffers or when the income is below the American standard of comfort and decency. When the family is disintegrated into a group of wage-earners there remains little or no opportunity for real family life.

**THE PRINCIPLE OF A MINIMUM WAGE.**—No industry has a moral right to exist at the price of keeping in hopeless poverty a portion of those who contribute to it. A morally defensible business must pay wages sufficient to enable the workers to live in self-respect. Under present conditions a part of society enjoys many comforts and conveniences partly at the expense of workers who receive less than a "living wage." Christian people are coming to see that industry should be so organized as to obviate the necessity of this sacrifice. The Christian ideal of justice cannot be realized unless the welfare of the people engaged in an industry is loyally safeguarded. If this means that consumers must pay higher prices on occasion, the answer is that no self-respecting consumer wants to keep prices down at the expense of cultural and physical degradation of workers. If it means a reduction of dividends, the investors must ask whether they are more concerned with profits than with people who make profits possible. The minimum wage is simply another aspect of the principle that industry must honestly pay its own costs in such a way that all can have access to a decent life.

**THE PROBLEM OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.**—The vastness and impersonality of organization of modern industry makes it imperative for workers to organize for the protection of their interests. Industry is already organized for the protection of the interests of owners and investors. The earlier form of organization of labor was in craft unions, that is, of workers in the same trade. This type is represented primarily by the American Federation of Labor. But when mass production

in industry brings together many kinds of workers a more inclusive sort of organization has seemed desirable. Industrial unions are organized on an inclusive basis aiming to take in all the workers in a certain plant. This type of union began within the ranks of the A.F. of L. but developed more definitely in the Congress of Industrial Organization.

Since the C.I.O. movement began, with the suspension of ten C.I.O. unions from the A.F. of L., there has been a striking growth in numbers in both types of unions. Their conflicts for power leading sometimes to jurisdictional strikes are to be regretted, but the churches in view of their own divisions are not in a position to pass harsh judgment. However, the labor movement cannot expect to make its greatest contribution or to win the greatest good will of the public on a basis of division and struggle. The labor movement requires of the individual worker a remarkable loyalty to the interests of the group even when such loyalty costs, as in the case of a prolonged strike. The direction of growth is for unions to broaden their sense of responsibility and to gain a well-balanced and inclusive view of the interests of employers and consumers, which also labor must keep in mind if it is to make its greatest social contribution or even to advance its own interests most successfully.

But labor organizations are subject to serious temptations. Graft and corruption occur when an official threatens a strike for the sole purpose of being bribed to prevent it. Honest laborers hotly condemn these crooked practices; but as long as contractors and man-

agers are willing to stoop to bribery, the temptation will continue. Such conditions are not characteristic of the labor union movement as a whole but are confined chiefly to certain trades in some large cities. It would be well, before entering too wholesale a condemnation against labor organizations, to recall the faults of our political history. We do not repudiate democracy simply because it produced a Tammany Hall. Are the shortcomings of the labor movement any more serious than the defects of popular government in the United States? With increased democratization of the control of industrial processes labor organizations become more constructive in spirit. Mr. Marshall E. Dimock of the United States Department of Justice has said that labor in this country is passing from the organizing to the administering period and that "if and when collective bargaining is accepted understandingly by the main body of the nation's business leaders, organized labor will tend to lose its fighting characteristics. Realizing that it has arrived it will willingly assume responsibilities toward the social order which it now looks upon with suspicion."<sup>3</sup>

While labor finds in organization an instrument for securing its rights, intelligent management finds the union an instrument for co-operation and for increasing efficiency of operation when rightly used. In some cases unions have given outstanding help in eliminating waste and in bringing out valuable new ideas for increased production. They are also a safety valve in that

<sup>3</sup> "Labor's Part in War and Reconstruction," *American Political Science Review*, April, 1941, p. 227.

the union provides a means for locating difficulties before they become aggravated. It has been found that the number of strikes is smaller where labor is organized than where it is not. Some distressing moral problems in reference to the labor movement are (1) obstacles placed in the way of organization by employers in spite of the fact that the right of labor to organize has been strongly set forth by religious, governmental, and industrial leaders; (2) violation of civil liberties of workers and violation by strikers of the civil liberties of workers not striking; (3) throwing labor leaders into jail on flimsy pretexts; (4) the placing of labor spies by employers among union workers; and (5) racketeering practices by men who have taken unions as their field of operations in certain large cities.

**SOME MORAL QUESTIONS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL CHRISTIAN To FACE.**—If the Christian is an employer, he will endeavor so to conduct the industry that workers will have the largest opportunity to realize a constructive, co-operative share in the enterprise. He will also seek to create such a relationship of the industry to society that it will be a medium through which all concerned may express the ideal of service to humanity. If the Christian is a worker, he will do his utmost to make his contribution such that the rights and dignity of labor cannot well be denied. He will endeavor to make the brotherhood of labor a genuine brotherhood, at the same time recognizing the brotherhood of all people and avoiding any feeling of class cleavage. He will insist on good workmanship and will oppose practices which are wasteful. If he is a labor leader, he will

need to understand both sides and to be a patient conciliator, to remove causes of difficulty and prevent controversy whenever possible, and to stand firmly for the cause of his fellow-workers. He will want to understand the basic factors in the economic situation, to promote good feeling among all, to make fair agreements and to stand by them, to get his workers to render good service, and to co-operate with the management in promoting efficiency, eliminating waste, and improving the product. The wise labor leader will seek to make it possible for the co-operative and fair employer to maintain his business stability strongly. The strength of the labor movement depends upon strong employers willing to co-operate with labor. The Christian will seek to raise the labor movement above all that is sordid and unscrupulous and to make it a self-respecting moral force capable of bringing more consideration and mutual respect into industrial relationships.

The Christian as a consumer of goods has a moral responsibility which is too seldom realized. There is always the temptation to seek for bargains without asking how the reduced price is made possible. Many a Christian who is quick to condemn an employer for paying "starvation wages" will at the same time insist on the low prices which require such wages. Shopping is a diversion often carried on without any consideration of the cost involved in catering to the whims of peripatetic buyers. Courtesy is demanded from sales-girls without a sense of responsibility for a corresponding courtesy on the part of the customer. Thoughtless-

ness and laziness on the part of customers result in the congestion of the few days before Christmas so dreaded by saleswomen in the department stores. There is quite as much lack of social imagination on the part of consumers as on the part of employers or employees—perhaps more, since the consumer is so essential to industry that he seldom is rebuked for his shortcomings. The Christian as a purchaser will want to buy where fair labor standards are recognized. He will pay his bills with reasonable promptness. Someone must pay. When the purchaser fails to do so, losses are caused, and there is damage to the structure of human relations.

The impersonal nature of habits of investment has already been discussed. The Christian should realize that his investment helps to maintain the particular industrial or financial enterprise into which it goes. If the matter of income from the investments is the sole consideration, the investor may unwittingly be contributing to some unworthy project. The Christian standard for investment would require an opportunity to share in a real service rendered to humanity. The percentage of income should be secondary to opportunity to share in a worthy enterprise. Least of all should the Christian be desirous of getting something for nothing through speculation which is inevitably demoralizing.

A Christian as stockholder or director has a responsibility and should exert an influence to secure fair wages, good working conditions, and fair advertising in the industry with which he is concerned. In this re-

lationship Christian ethics also calls for production of something that is of real value to those who purchase it. Even good wages and favorable working conditions could not, of course, justify a Christian in investing in an enterprise whose product is worthless.

**CHRISTIANITY MUST MEET THE BASIC ISSUES OF INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY.**—With an economy of abundance well within our reach we need to ask to what extent the present industrial order meets certain basic human problems and how it can be so shaped as to meet them more adequately. Among the major problems in the economic area are the following:

1. Overcoming poverty by making possible adequate nutrition, housing, and work for all the people.
2. Provision of economic foundations for the development of personality and of family living.
3. The creation of situations favorable to good will and fellowship and the elimination of causes of bitterness and class cleavage in our democratic society.
4. Greater spread of purchasing-power, correction of the economic dislocation which results in underconsumption on the part of great masses of people and excessive piling-up of capital for investment in the hands of a few. This creates an unbalanced situation in which more is produced than can be sold and that which is needed is beyond the reach of great masses of people. The depression showed the disaster resulting from inadequate purchasing-power of the masses and too large a share of profits going to capital so that in the end even productive investment was reduced to the vanishing-point.
5. Provision for the possibility of an orderly and peaceful world by economic arrangements favorable to justice and brotherhood. Underlying the whole problem of our attitude toward war is the question of our relation to the deprivations, frustrations, bitternesses, and grasping of economic advantages that

lead to war. The Christian who finds in the basic teaching of his religion that greed is an evil thing can see also in the world-situation that it is a deadly thing. Among the most difficult problems is to control the private business in munitions which has stimulated fears and has promoted international armament races even in peacetime. Our economy of abundance must therefore be guarded against an "economy of destruction."

6. Provision of a more adequate and more sound pattern of economic living than those offered by the revolutionary movements which have sprung up in so many parts of the world. These cannot be dealt with effectively in any way short of removing their causes and presenting a more satisfactory program of living.

The ethical imperative of the urge for life and fulfillment must be recognized in all economic relations. Situations in which masses of people live in abject underprivilege are festering places of trouble. Slums, economic discrimination against minorities, the unfavorable position of a large part of agriculture, including the plight of share-croppers, and the inability of many youths arriving at age of employment to secure work are facts that challenge Christian idealism and the democratic integrity of our country. Depressions set in glaring light the need of justice and economic sharing. They also harden economic life by fear. The solutions will not be easy, but what reason has Christianity for confining itself to problems that are easy?

**THE DEMAND FOR A BETTER SOCIAL ORDER.**—The Malvern Conference,<sup>4</sup> to which reference has already been made, called for "the restoration of man's economic activity to its proper place as the servant of his

<sup>4</sup> *Information Service* (Federal Council of Churches, March 1, 1941), pp. 2, 3.

whole personal life.” The conference also held that the satisfaction of human needs is the only true end of production, that “no one should be deprived of the support necessary for the good life by the fact that at some time there is no demand for his labor,” and that “the church should strive to keep alive in all men and in all functional groups a sense of vocation.” It stated that “we must recover reverence for the earth and its resources, treating it no longer as a reservoir of potential wealth to be exploited, but as a store house of divine bounty on which we utterly depend.” The members held that this will involve a “deliberate revival of agriculture by securing to the agricultural laborer good wages and to the farmer a secure and just price.” In the Ackland Amendment, passed by a very large majority, it was further stated that private ownership of the great resources of nature is a stumbling block making it harder to secure a real Christian order.

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America has set forth comprehensive ideals for which the churches should stand as follows:

1. Practical application of the Christian principle of social well-being to the acquisition and use of wealth, subordination of speculation and the profit motive to the creative and co-operative spirit
2. Social planning and control of the credit and monetary systems and the economic processes for the common good
3. The right of all to the opportunity for self-maintenance; a wider and fairer distribution of wealth; a living wage, as a minimum, and above this a just share for the worker in the product of industry and agriculture

4. Safeguarding of all workers, urban and rural, against harmful conditions of labor and occupational injury and disease
5. Social insurance against sickness, accident, want in old age, and unemployment
6. Reduction of hours of labor as the general productivity of industry increases; release from employment at least one day in seven, with a shorter working week in prospect
7. Such special regulation of the conditions of work of women as shall safeguard their welfare and that of the family and the community
8. The right of employees and employers alike to organize for collective bargaining and social action; protection of both in the exercise of this right; the obligation of both to work for the public good; encouragement of co-operatives and other organizations among farmers and other groups
9. Abolition of child labor; adequate provision for the protection, education, spiritual nurture, and wholesome recreation of every child
10. Protection of the family by the single standard of purity; educational preparation for marriage, homemaking, and parenthood
11. Economic justice for the farmer in legislation, financing, transportation, and the price of farm products as compared with the cost of machinery and other commodities which he must buy
12. Extension of the primary cultural opportunities and social services now enjoyed by urban populations to the farm family
13. Protection of the individual and society from the social, economic, and moral waste of any traffic in intoxicants and habit-forming drugs
14. Application of the Christian principle of redemption to the treatment of offenders; reform of penal and correctional methods and institutions and of criminal court procedure
15. Justice, opportunity, and equal rights for all; mutual good will and co-operation among racial, economic, and religious groups

16. Repudiation of war, drastic reduction of armaments, participation in international agencies for the peaceable settlement of all controversies; the building of a co-operative world-order
17. Recognition and maintenance of the rights and responsibilities of free speech, free assembly, and a free press; the encouragement of free communication of mind with mind as essential to the discovery of truth<sup>5</sup>

In so far as the existing order presupposes and capitalizes un-Christian motives, the Christian is under obligation to protest. Such protests will often be suspected and denounced. Christians who suggest new forms of industrial or political organization will be branded as dangerous "radicals." If a Christian is convinced that some radical reorganization of industrial life would actually bring about better human relations, he has the right and the duty to attempt to convince others. The truly thoughtful Christian will usually be more concerned with definite and practicable improvements in existing conditions than with the proclamation of large generalizations which are likely for some time to remain in the realm of theory. At the same time the Christian spirit will welcome all idealism which serves to create in men the confidence that the evils in our man-made system of industry may be eliminated if only men care enough about human welfare to seek to secure the conditions which will enable men to live at their best. Faith in the Kingdom of God—a righteous social order—is an inalienable element in Christian living.

<sup>5</sup> *Social Ideals of the Churches* (New York: Federal Council of Churches, 1933), pp. 18, 19.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. To what extent can the rules of ancient industry guide us today? Would a study of the Bible enable you to discover whether labor unions are to be encouraged or discouraged?
2. Define "paternalism." Compare the duty of a master to a slave with the duty of an employer to an employee. Could a slave demand a contract from his master? Could he stipulate his hours of labor? Compare the work of a house servant with the work of a factory girl. In which occupation is there more paternalism? What characteristics does a housewife usually have in mind when she wants a "good servant"?
3. What is meant by the phrase "providential order"? Was slavery believed to be providentially ordained? Why has poverty usually been regarded as a part of a providential dispensation? Do modern idealists believe that poverty is an inevitable aspect of human society? How does our knowledge of the part which human ingenuity has had in creating the present industrial order affect our sense of responsibility for that order?
4. "The old honesty could assume that goods belonged to their makers and could then discuss exchanges and contracts. The new honesty will first have to face a prior question, namely, who owns what is collectively produced, and are the present rules of the game distributing the returns honestly and fairly?" It is easy to determine ownership in modern industry? For example, just what moral responsibility does the owner of a share in the United States Steel Corporation feel? Just what does he own?
5. When men speak of a "good" business what do they mean? Is a "good" business necessarily morally good? Is a "good" salesman primarily concerned with the welfare of those to whom he makes a sale? How would you distinguish between "profit" and "profiteering"?
6. Compare a village or town more than a century old with a newly built industrial community. Which is the more attractive to live in? What common interests have people in an in-

dustrial community? Why do radical social theories find so ready a hearing in such communities?

7. It is frequently said that a laborer is entitled to a living wage. How would you determine what a living wage is? Why does a laborer want more wages? Are his reasons morally defensible? Are they morally different from the reasons why an investor wants good returns? Has a workingman as much moral right to own an automobile as a businessman has? Do you think that laborers have an inferior status in society?
8. Suppose socialism to be a better industrial system than the present one, would it be a simple matter to introduce it? What have been the effects of a radical change of industrial organization in Russia?
9. Is there a distinctively "Christian" pattern for the industrial order? Are Christian people agreed as to what reforms in our industrial system should be urged? Why cannot the church immediately right industrial wrongs?
10. Compare the scale of income of an official in an industry with that of an employee. Are the differences which you find morally defensible? Who determines the salary scale? It is considered proper for a corporation to employ a lawyer to promote industrial interests. Some industries refuse to recognize a paid agent of a labor union. Is there moral difference between the two cases?
11. What is meant by the democratic management of an industry? Why is such management demanded by laborers? Can fair rules be established unless all parties concerned be consulted?
12. Who pays the cost of production in an industry employing children at low wages? Has a seasonal industry responsibility for the workers during the slack season? What is profit-sharing? Ought workers as well as investors to have an opportunity to share in the profits of a business?
13. Children often want to leave school and go to work. Should they be allowed to do so? If not, why not? Define the phrase "minimum wage"? Why should people not be left free to work

for as little as they are willing to take? Is there any difference between the work which a child does with his parents in the home or on the farm and the labor of a child in a factory?

14. What is collective bargaining? Why can a labor union make a better bargain than an individual worker? Compare the ethics of a shareholder demanding large dividends with the ethics of a laborer demanding large wages. Do you think that the "politics" in the labor movement are morally worse than the "politics" of your own city government? What attitude ought a Christian to take toward labor unions?
15. Certain stores have as a motto for their salespersons, "the customer is always right." Do you think the customer is as conscientious as the store management? Do you ever hunt bargains? How does bargain-hunting differ from profiteering?
16. Can one who believes in the Kingdom of God be satisfied with the present social order? What part did Christianity have in doing away with slavery? Do you think that Christian idealism can effect improvements in our industrial system?
17. What are the moral or business advantages of co-operatives?

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## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS

IT WAS dangerous for a Christian in the early days to be suspected of having any active hand in politics. The Roman government had had sufficient experience with Jewish insubordination to be distrustful of any movement arising in Palestine. The Christians had to take great pains to prove that they were not a bad influence in the politics of their day. They were living in daily expectation of the return of Christ to earth to destroy the existing powers and to set up the Kingdom of God. It would be vain to expect any all-embracing doctrine of political ethics from this early period. The New Testament is concerned with the inner religious life of the individual rather than with the social and political order.

**THE POLITICAL THEORY OF THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH.**  
—After the conversion of Constantine, official relations were established between the church and the Roman Empire. As the power of the Empire declined, the Catholic church assumed larger and larger importance as the guardian of the social order. The church herself became a political power. She promulgated laws. She maintained armies and entered into warfare with other political powers. She attempted to insist on certain definite relationships between herself and the rulers of

Europe. The medieval church was very much in politics.

In the background of all thinking concerning political duty lay a distinct theological conception of the nature of the state. It was believed that political government was ordained by God for the express purpose of restraining evil. Obedience to the ruler was required as a part of obedience to God. Under this conception the duty of the ordinary Christian was simple. He was to be obedient to the existing government. He had no part in the making of that government. That was the business of the ruler, who was responsible to God for the way in which he administered the trust divinely committed to him. The subjects had simply to obey the ruler.

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF CHURCH AND STATE.**—The church also was believed to be a divinely established institution. The Christian must be obedient to the church, exactly as he must be obedient to the state and for the same reason, *viz.*, because it was divinely established. The church had jurisdiction over the spiritual interests of man, while the state looked after his temporal interests. Theoretically, there was a clear division between these two realms, so that church and state need not clash. But a temporal ruler might conceivably command his subjects to do something that would injure or destroy their chance for salvation. In such a case, since the eternal welfare of men is more important than their temporal comfort, the requirements of the church should take precedence.

**THE NEW FREEDOM INTRODUCED BY THE REFORMATION.**—The Reformation destroyed that church control of politics which had been attempted and often carried out during the Middle Ages. This left the ruler more absolute than ever in his realm. A divided Christendom could no longer dictate a universal political policy. The growing ambitions of the nations of Europe were able to make good use of this release from ecclesiastical pressure. The era of royal absolutism thus arose. Christians must still obey the political ruler; but they began to dare to defy a church which attempted to coerce conscience.

**THE RIGHTS OF DISSENTERS.**—A new feature was introduced when the attempt was made to inforce uniformity in religion within a nation. The dissenters felt that obedience to God required them to maintain their form of worship even though the state had forbidden it. Religious loyalty was thus enlisted in defiance of political authority just as religious loyalty in the early days of the Reformation was enlisted in defiance of ecclesiastical authority. The dissenting religious communities demanded liberty of prophesying (freedom of speech) and freedom of worship (right of free assembly). These demands were later widened to include the rights of men in general as over against a government inclined to be tyrannical.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN DEMOCRATIC IDEALS.**—In most cases modern governments rest on a revolution against the tyranny of a ruler. But revolution, judged by the medieval standards, meant dis-

obedience against the ruler. Modern democracies exalt an independent attitude which the traditional tenets of Christian theology condemned. It is not to be wondered at that Christian ethics is somewhat uncertain today in its interpretation of political duty.

The theological theory of the origin and justification of political government is almost unknown today, save as ecclesiastical tradition keeps it alive. The medieval theory is reversed. The sovereign citizens command. The officials of the government must obey. The Constitution of the United States begins with the words: "We the people of the United States, in order to" secure certain specified ends, "do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America." The constitution is a human creation, designed to further humanly defined ends. Government is an instrument to be used by men rather than a nonhuman authority to which one must submit for theological reasons. Such a government must deal with all men alike. It cannot recognize one form of religion in preference to others. Its duty is to secure justice for all citizens regardless of differences of religious belief.

Democratic government is based on respect for personality and regard for the welfare of all the people, which attitudes are of the very essence of Christianity. Democracy brings out the best energies of men and women because they are free and use their powers willingly. In a democracy the citizen and the government are in a relationship that is friendly rather than coercive, and on this principle the governments of the

world should be in friendly, not coercive, relationships. Democratic leadership gets its power from the consent of the governed.

**THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STATE.**—One who has been accustomed to the advantages enjoyed under a well-organized and well-administered government gains a vivid realization of the moral significance of these advantages if he has occasion to travel or to engage in business in a land with an inefficient, corrupt, or despotic government. We depend upon the state to keep the peace among citizens, to make laws and administer them for the welfare of all, to perform certain services which can best be carried out on a national basis, and, in co-operation with other nations, to create a world-order of peace and justice. The state is thus an indispensable instrument in securing the kind of social life which Christianity believes to be desirable. There is every reason why Christians should desire strong and efficient government.

Perhaps the greatest problem in government today has to do with world-government. While we have had many well-governed nations, we have not had a well-governed world. This is not because of any inherent impossibility but rather because in the gradual progression of humanity from smaller to larger units of government and from administration grounded in compulsion to government based on consent we have not yet worked out the problems of world-government beyond certain feeble beginnings. There is no more reason for stopping with the first beginnings of world-organization than in giving up in the face of any other

difficult but enormously significant objective. In a day of world-intercommunication the good life for humanity requires more effective means of world-co-operation. "New occasions teach new duties" and create their new necessities.

**THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN.**—The moral advantages of a rightly ordered government are so obvious that the Christian will be an eager supporter of all worthy political institutions. In observance of laws, responsible voting, payment of taxes, willingness to serve in public office and in other ways to give time to public affairs there is need of a new attitude on the part of citizens. When government is rightly conducted, the tax money which we pay is one of the best investments we can make. It gives us our schools, roads, and parks. It provides for local and national security and supports many valuable forms of public service. If the tax money is used efficiently for such ends we should pay it gladly; and if it is not well used, we should take our share of the responsibility for correcting the situation. In a democratic system the people are likely to have about the sort of government they deserve. If they are careless, they can blame no one but themselves if the government is inefficient or corrupt. Christian citizenship requires that we take an interest in our government as an instrument of the common good. The government is our own, and what it does is our responsibility. Because of the greater responsibility placed on the average citizen and the greater power put into his hands the quality of citizenship must be high. The citizen in a democracy must

accept more obligations in order to gain more rights and privileges for himself and for others.

In the life of all great public servants there is not only ability to cope with issues of their day but a moral dignity of devotion to the welfare of the people. To promote righteousness in and through public office is a difficult task and at the same time an opportunity for Christian service of unusual significance. Whether in office or in private life one of the ethical responsibilities of a citizen of a democratic nation is to be intelligent about the issues which arise and to understand the practical workings of his government. To hold that politics is "rotten" and therefore should be avoided by Christians is a way of failing to measure up to the responsibilities of Christian citizenship.

#### THE MORAL WEAKNESS OF THE UTILITARIAN STATE.

—It is quite possible for men of low moral standards to think of the state as a tool for securing what they desire. Within a democratic nation special interests bring pressure to bear on legislative bodies to enact laws beneficial to themselves. If laws are enacted which are felt to represent the desires of one group and to ignore or thwart the desires of another equally important group, the latter group is likely to seek to evade or to nullify the objectionable legislation. The consciousness of the citizen in a democracy that he is sovereign, while the government is subject to his approval for its support, makes disrespect for law easy on the part of thoughtless and selfish people. There is real danger that the state may fail to win respect just because the exercise of popular sovereignty may be prac-

ticed without any adequate moral education of citizens in the meaning of politics. Such a moral education is the most important task for a democracy to undertake.

**EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP.**—The moral duty of a citizen is different from the moral duty of a subject. The citizen has a creative share in political affairs which the subject does not enjoy. The duty of respect for law, which was inculcated in the morality of subjects, must be supplemented by the duty of striving to secure good laws and to have them administered with efficiency and with impartiality. The capacity to understand public affairs to a reasonable extent, the ability to judge whether a given policy is good or not, the willingness to act in accordance with public well-being rather than in accordance with private interest—such are some of the moral requirements of a citizen. Religious education should include training in such matters. A part of the time spent in a vague study of the vicissitudes of the kings of Israel might well be spent in gaining a better acquaintance with the moral and religious issues of our own day. There is a largely undeveloped field here for adult classes in our Sunday schools.

**DEMOCRACY AND TOTALITARIANISM.**—Because of some failures of democratic states to measure up to their responsibilities in the handling of domestic issues and of foreign relations the way has been prepared for a resurgence of autocracy and a development of dictatorships set up by men who have promised to restore their nations to order and prosperity. In these dicta-

torships there has been a restoration of the old political theory of obedience to the ruler, although without its main safeguard, namely, the recognition that the ruler is responsible to God for the manner in which he administers his trust.

The democratic idea that the state is made for man is challenged by the totalitarian doctrine that the individual and the family exist for the state. Totalitarianism dispenses with individual consent. It dictates ideas, prescribes duties, makes education a tool, and seeks to do the same with religion. It deals with minorities by firing squads and concentration camps. It makes a cult of national vainglory and causes cultivated hates and brutalities to pass as virtues. Our abhorrence of these things should make us even more determined to eradicate the wrongs and injustices the correction of which lies more definitely in our own hands. As we criticize totalitarian governments we need to subject our criticism to scrutiny lest it become an instrument of bias on our part.

While the overexaltation of the state is a perversion, yet democracy involves the assumption that a good state is a valuable thing in itself. The individual and the state are both ends in themselves and at the same time means to other ends. In government as in other matters every end achieved becomes in turn a means for the achieving of further ends. Means and ends are convenient terms for indicating that life has progression and coherence. The democratic attitude regards every individual as truly an end in himself and at the same time as a potential means or force for the creation

of a good society. A good society also is a means for cherishing and preserving freedom of speech, of assembly, and of the press, freedom of worship, impartial administration of laws, unhampered suffrage, freedom of education, equality of bargaining-power, protection of the consumer, and access to materials, to tools, and to a part in the work of mankind. These are worthy ends of government, and at the same time they are means of guaranteeing to the people the opportunity for a good life. Government needs constantly to be seeking the means which may reasonably be expected to lead to the most desirable ends and not to confine itself merely to following traditional ways, however excellent in their time.

Democracy can be degraded into a mere form which does not effectively bring its citizens to the great goals which it sets up in theory. The democratic process must be a forward-moving one seeking to produce a high type of individual, a secure family life, and creative interaction among the various elements in society. It must also secure a maximum development and use of individual and group capacities.

Democratic government is based on the faith that man is so essentially sound that when given a fair chance he seeks the truth, corrects errors, and protects the right. If this faith in man is valid, it bodes ultimate good for society. A confident faith in man can face a disrupted world and believe that ways will be found of rebuilding its broken structure. However, there is no easy and inexpensive way of doing this. In a democracy there must be an inner impulse of the citizen to do

his part in the social process and to accept certain limitations for the sake of the greatest freedom of all. Democracy must overcome such foes as ignorance, autocratic attitudes, greed, and lack of dedication. Democracy is a spirit as well as a form of government. It requires dedication to the common purposes. The Christian spirit of brotherhood gives democracy an underlying attitude which it needs. Religion provides an inner enthusiasm which can fire the imagination and marshal energies for advancement of the common good. Democracy, however, must really function in solving the concrete problems of the common good better than its competitors do.

**THE PROBLEM OF DISSENTERS.**—Sometimes religious convictions bring people into conflict with certain laws. Crucial questions of obedience to law have arisen in the United States in recent times in connection with the rejection of health regulations, such as compulsory vaccination by Christian Scientists, refusal to salute the flag by Jehovah's Witnesses, and conscientious objection to war and even to registration. The question how far a minority or an individual can participate in the life of the community and yet in the name of conscience refuse to obey laws dealing with crucial matters can only gradually be determined. It may be suggested that, in addition to the general principle of consideration on either side and an effort of each side fully to see the position of the other, the dissenting individual should make all the more of his citizenship in working for the common good in every matter in which an issue of conscience is not involved.

A most significant and hopeful thing about democratic government is that it allows criticism and encourages a "loyal opposition." Just because of this the individual while guarding his conscience in the sight of God should go as far as he can in co-operating with the society whose benefits he enjoys. One implication of the democratic settlement of problems is that the individual who disagrees should co-operate to the utmost of his ability.

**Is PATRIOTISM A CHRISTIAN DUTY?**—When the state is reasonably well fulfilling its function of securing a regime of justice, all good citizens will gratefully acknowledge the benefits thus achieved and will loyally support the state. But what if the state has become an instrument of evil-minded men? What if it is engaged in fostering injustice and distrust instead of promoting good will? There has always been the recognition that if loyalty to the state involves disloyalty to Christ the Christian must be loyal to Christ at all costs. The dissenters in England insisted on their religious rights even at the cost of disobedience to the state. In the history of the United States, when the government seemed to be distinctly on the side of slavery, ardent Christians gave voice to utterances which conventional defenders of law and order regarded as disloyal. Christian leaders in Europe have heroically stood for their convictions in the recent period, not counting the cost.

The state cannot morally demand complete loyalty unless it fulfils the moral conditions under which loyalty can be gladly given by right-minded men. There have been justifiable revolutions in history. But instead of

thinking of such dissenters or revolutionaries as disloyal we think of them as people who through their unusual courage and loyalty to the essence of human welfare were willing to oppose "that which was" in the interest of "that which ought to be." In a democratic government there is usually little need of drastic action because a minority holding firmly to some high ideal has the opportunity of working to convince the majority and so of bringing desirable changes by orderly process.

The ethics of progress in government requires that there should be a constant process of agitation and education in the direction of continued improvement in the common life. In patriotism men usually are voicing loyalty to an ideal state. They have in mind the perfection they would like to see their nation attain. Patriotism is perhaps the most effective means of arousing in men a moral devotion to the state. Without it, it is difficult to see how the spirit of dedication could be aroused throughout a nation. The Christian will always want to be patriotic, but he will want his patriotism and that of others turned toward the constructive side of national well-being and not toward mass emotions of hatred and destructiveness in which patriotism has so often been enlisted.

THE PROBLEM OF WAR.—War involves actions and attitudes which are totally opposed to the spirit of Jesus. In war one must lie and hate and kill. The moral disaster of it can scarcely be exaggerated. Every great war is followed by a period of moral laxity. Men cannot be taught to hate and lie and use violence with-

out incalculable moral damage. Although war may stir people to self-sacrifice and patriotism, the problems involved in creating a world of peace, in harnessing the forces of nature, in overcoming crime, and in turning social life toward constructive ends will bring all needed challenge to courage, resourcefulness and patriotic devotion. The "moral equivalents" of war are about us on every hand, and these conquests of peace are all of superior moral value to the incidental virtues which shine out against the dark background of hatred and slaughter. Not only Christians, but nearly all thoughtful men, deplore war. It is a part of any sane morality to attempt to eliminate this curse.

**NO SIMPLE SOLUTION FOR THE WAR PROBLEM.**—There is no simple solution for the problem of war. In the presence of aggravated injustices and rankling hatreds some leader is almost sure to arise with an appeal to arms. Mere good will is not enough to prevent war unless it is reinforced by justice, by fairness in distribution of opportunity, and by respect for the freedom and integrity of life of other peoples. A mere desire for peace may amount to a vain wish to preserve the status quo when others have a bitter determination to correct certain things by force if necessary. To condemn resort to force is of little value apart from determination to eliminate those features in international life which make one people hate, fear, or resent another people. When one people belittles, defrauds, threatens, or exploits another, there is little ethical value in proposals of peace on the part of those who have the upper hand. Work done in the interest of justice, mutual under-

standing, co-operation, and effective international organization is the most effective work possible in the interest of peace. Some of the agitation for peace has lacked reality because it has come from more privileged people who were not fully willing to share their advantages with others.

War is a sin and a blunder, but the Christian must work at removing its causes at the same time that he deplores its futility and wickedness. The causes of war include economic, political, cultural, and sometimes personal factors. Much may depend on the attitude of an individual leader. Causes of war are related also to a nation's choice of values. Nations, like individuals, may set themselves toward the lesser values, such as the gaining of territory or other material resources, rather than to the higher aims of co-operation, mutual confidence, and the maximum advance of culture.

THE CHRISTIAN IN WARTIME.—In wartime the Christian must do whatever can be done to keep alive or create attitudes which will permit a just and lasting peace to be achieved. During wartime is an especially suitable period to gain clearer understanding of the forces which undermine peace and to come to repentance for one's share in those forces. Christians can also oppose unlimited antagonism, can minister to prisoners and victims, can preserve ties of brotherhood with Christians in opposing nations, and can strive to see human questions as in the presence of God who is no respecter of persons or of nationalities. As to participation in war, there are two main attitudes both of which are followed by conscientious Christians. Some, with

the conviction that there are some evils so great that to fight against them with all possible weapons is better than to permit them, join in the war effort. Others, unable to reconcile the thoughts and ways of war with the spirit of Jesus and the universal fatherhood of God, refuse absolutely to participate.

**THE CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR.**—The conscientious objector is a person who believes that war is so great an evil that a Christian ought to refuse absolutely to have anything to do with it. He finds a personal solution of the problem of war. He takes whatever punishment his government may see fit to impose on him, but he resolutely keeps himself clear from any complicity in this colossal sin. The heroism of such Christian loyalty should be frankly recognized. These objectors suffer from the fact that they are classed with people who want to evade war purely from cowardice or from selfish reasons. It takes more moral courage for a fine-minded man to face opprobrium than it does for a coarse-minded bully to enlist in a fight amid the plaudits of emotional throngs.

In democratic governments, which are the only ones under which conscientious objectors can live, there is provision for alternatives to combatant duty on the part of men who oppose war on religious grounds. A few conscientious objectors make a heroic demonstration of protest by refusing to co-operate with the government to any extent as far as war is concerned. Their refusal to register is tantamount to anarchy from the governmental standpoint because one who will not co-operate in the national provision made for the respect-

ing of his conscientious position is repudiating government as far as that matter is concerned. The person who takes this position regards it as a necessary form of loyalty to a higher order to which war is utterly abhorrent. Such an objector, however, not only is serving notice that he will not allow government to coerce him to do that which is abhorrent to his conscience but is indicating that so far as in him lies he will protest against a provision for others to do under government that which their consciences regard as necessary for protection of right against aggressive tyranny.

Something more far reaching than purely individual moral decision is needed. When war is once declared, it is too late to deal with it in any reasonable way. The all-important moral problem is to prevent the drift into war. As long as war is averted, reason and argument and adjustment are possible. When war is once declared, men are perforce committed to unreasonable conduct. There can be no ideally consistent moral behavior after war is declared. Almost invariably there are plausible contentions on both sides. Each side magnifies its own position and minimizes or distorts the position of the other so that citizens on both sides are led to think that their country either has a clear case or has the great preponderance of right on its side. The result is that honest and well-meaning people on both sides enter into appalling and devastating conflict.

**THE NEED OF A MORAL METHOD OF DECIDING CONTROVERSIES.**—A great moral defect of war is that it gives the decision to the side which the greatest military power and skill. But, if there is no other available

means of deciding questions, war is inevitable. In the realm of the smaller social units methods have been devised which do away with unnecessary violence. Increasingly it has become possible for men to appeal to some impartial tribunal when they could not agree among themselves. Dueling has almost entirely disappeared. Clan feuds have been superseded by more inclusive loyalties as legal methods have been accepted in the place of private violence. The next step in the evolution of peace is the development of more inclusive means and methods of international co-operation, with review and prolonged study of questions which involve possible recourse to arms. We need a rule of law among nations rather than precarious dependence upon treaties, and we need judicial agencies with real weight of authority. Up to the present such devices as the World Court and the League of Nations have developed faults of organization or have met with such misunderstanding and opposition that these valuable experiments have been largely frustrated. Nevertheless, their successes, which have been substantial, are significant for the future and their failures offer necessary lessons.

In spite of failures and discouragements humanity must press forward to the development of effective agencies of international adjustment. The development of government on a world-scale is one of the greatest social, political, and ethical advances that could be made in the next period. Such development would involve the building-up both of the substance and of the power of international law. It would also

involve the development of courts for dealing with international adjustments and the finding of persuasive means of getting decisions of such courts accepted. In the federation of the world, colonies and areas not yet ready for complete self-government would be administered primarily in the interest of their own people and secondarily in the interest of justice among all nations having trade relations with such areas. A better organization of the world's population in relation to government would aid in the development of a universal mind in place of strong national prejudices. There would be an adjustment of the theory of national sovereignty to a world-order safeguarding the legitimate interests of nations and peoples and implementing the peaceable intention of the bulk of humanity.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL MIND.**—The Christian cannot consent to any interpretation of national sovereignty which would imply an unwillingness to submit national interests to moral examination. Just as no individual can morally be permitted to be the sole judge in a controversy where others are involved, so no nation has the moral right to exercise "sovereignty" in disregard of the claims of other nations. Any individual who thinks that he must always be right is taking an immature attitude, and so his relations with others must perforce be on a low plane. So also if a nation holds that its ways are always right without the possibility of any appeal, then national life is put on a low plane. When national experience reaches greater maturity, there will be more willingness to discuss issues and the sovereignty of each nation

will be held not in terms of shallow conceit and stubborn pride but in terms of securing the highest good for its own people and at the same time contributing its utmost to the universal good. Along with the worship of Mammon the unrestrained worship of country is a perverse and destructive form of idolatry. The Christian may not forget that lesson so often ignored—that God is not the God of any one people to the exclusion of others. No greater service can be rendered in these days than the cultivation of a Christian attitude toward other peoples.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Were the early Christians patriotic? What difference do you see between the relation of an early Christian to his government and your relation to your government? Could we learn from the New Testament what are the duties of a Christian citizen of the United States?
2. What was the doctrine of the "divine right" of rulers? Was it a Christian doctrine? Who makes the laws in an autocracy? Was the medieval ruler an autocrat? What was the duty of a subject in an autocracy?
3. What was the scope of the temporal ruler, according to the medieval theory? What was the scope of the church? Did the church and the state ever clash? Why was the state expected to punish heretics? Which was more important in the Middle Ages, the church or a national government? Which is more important in America?
4. What rights did dissenters claim? Were these rights recognized in medieval politics? If the dissenters won their point, how could heresy be punished? Does the modern state punish heretics? How did the dissenters help to establish political democracy?

5. What part has revolution played in the establishment of modern democracies? Do Americans approve the revolution of 1776? Why?
6. Why can the United States not officially establish any specific religion? Is it correct to call the United States a "Christian nation"?
7. What is the difference between the attitude of a "subject" toward his "ruler" and the attitude of a "citizen" toward the chief executive in a democracy?
8. The traditional theological conception of the state asserted that its function was to restrain evildoers. Does this seem to you an adequate definition? "The best government is one which governs least." Do you agree? Name some ways in which you depend upon the state to secure your rights?
9. Does popular government mean that the state is merely a tool of the citizens? How does "special legislation" lower political ideals? Ought a citizen to obey a law which he does not approve?
10. Why is education more necessary for a "citizen" than it is for a "subject"? What is "public spirit"? Is public spirit equally important in times of war and in times of peace?
11. "My country! May she ever be in the right. But right or wrong, my country." Is this the best expression of patriotism? Were the dissenters in England patriotic? Why does a "conscientious objector" refuse to support the government in war? Are his reasons good ones? How does patriotism help to elevate political ideals?
12. "War is the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind today. It is utterly and irremediably un-Christian." Do Christians generally pass this judgment on war? What is the effect of war on public morals? Can any individual stop war? Which is easier, to prevent a war from starting or to stop it after it has started? What in your judgment are the chief causes of war?

13. Would it be as "honorable" to submit international disputes to a tribunal of justice as to appeal to war? Ought Christian sentiment to support a world-court? What is meant by an "international mind"? Why must the Christian try to think in terms of international interests?

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## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE ENLARGING SCOPE OF CHRISTIAN IDEALISM

THE sense of obligation arises largely out of our relationships with other people. No human life can be complete in itself, and every life gets its meaning and quality through its relationships. This means for every one of us that there are others whose lives cannot be complete unless we make the contribution which it is natural to expect of us. A person's sense of moral obligation is likely to be strong in the realm of close personal relationships and weak in realms where no such actual contacts exist. Our practical codes of morals are almost inevitably developed piecemeal. Even when some theoretical unification of the different realms of duty has been worked out, one's practical conduct is still influenced by the particular loyalties which pull upon the affections.

THE CHRISTIAN FACES DIVERSE OBLIGATIONS.—The Christian, like everyone else, lives and thinks in terms of practical loyalties, whose power he cannot escape. But the demands thus made do not always harmonize, nor do they always seem consistent with what the Christian has learned from his religious teachers. A conspicuous example of such maladjustment at the present day is the problem of war. The deeds which

are essential to the winning of a war are utterly abhorrent to the normal Christian conscience. Yet in time of war most Christians are constrained to participate in what they abhor. What is true of war is true in lesser degree in other relationships. The exigencies of industrial success often require acts and attitudes which one would not approve in private relationships. Physicians, lawyers, teachers, and even ministers sometimes face situations where professional ethics requires one kind of conduct while personal affection or Christian love might suggest a different course. It ought not to surprise or dismay the Christian if he finds that his moral convictions are not always consistent with one another. Perhaps the inescapable influence of complex and often conflicting moral demands keeps morality from becoming stereotyped and formal.

Rules of moral behavior, although they arose out of much valid experience over long ranges of time, were for the most part formulated when people traveled on foot, navigated by the use of sails, communicated at a distance by messengers on horseback, and made things by hand. Now that a new situation has been developed with world-wide news, instant communication between continents, and new interdependence of all people, there are many new areas of ethical interrelationships where there is need of carefully working out the meaning of Christian living. In world-trade we want to know how the product is to be used, in reading the news we must determine how much allowance to make for propaganda, and even in reference to difficulties or disorders experienced on the other side of the world we

are often compelled to ask to what extent we have a responsibility either as to the causes of disorder or as to their study and amelioration. We have to cope with many new kinds of ethical problems. This fact calls for accurate interpretation of the nature of each situation, for a clear conception of what our ethical responsibility is, and for a wise choice of ways and means of accomplishing that which we ought to do. There is no rule-of-thumb, but there is a rule of love and justice on whose broad principles we may proceed to express ourselves as Christians.

**THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL OF PERFECTION.**—The loftiness of Christian idealism has frequently been expressed in the feeling that the superiority of Christianity to any other form of idealism should mean the defense of Christianity as an absolutely perfect system of ethics. The individual Christian was likewise expected to lead a sinless life. Such an ideal demands rare devotion and has been effectively taught by some of the most saintly Christian leaders. The earnest person is likely to feel that he should have no more tolerance for ethical errors than has a musician for a false note or an engineer for ill-fitting parts in a delicate mechanism. Unethical living has equally unhappy results although they are not so immediately apparent. Neither carelessness nor pale conformity can approach the ideal of Christlike living. Those who have challenged existing ways in the name of God and with allegiance to a higher ideal are the ones who have stimulated the sluggish spirit of man toward progress. But the path of perfection has sometimes been artificially simplified, as

in asceticism, by deliberately avoiding some of the contacts which normally occur in social life; or the Christian has been in such distress that he has given almost exclusive attention to purification from sins with little interest in constructive moral planning.

**THE MORAL PROBLEM OF COMPROMISE.**—The word “compromise” has an evil moral repute. It suggests that the one who makes the compromise is less conscientious than is the person who refuses to budge. But some sort of give and take is often essential if people are to get along together at all. To refuse ever to compromise would mean the obstinate refusal to give any weight to the point of view of others in ethical matters. Such obstinacy is no more defensible in a Christian than in anyone else. Since we develop our loyalties in relation to diverse groups and occupations, one of the primary moral tasks is to integrate these loyalties so that we may pass from one to the other without moral disaster. The progress of moral ideals and practices is largely due to the modifications and adjustments made necessary by conflicting interests. Narrow group loyalties, like family feuds, are eventually eliminated by the demands of a more inclusive social order. Religious bigotry is ultimately condemned for humanitarian reasons. Class prejudice is compelled to reckon with the rights of society as a whole. National ambitions are eventually required to find their place in a world where nations must co-operate if they are not all to be destroyed. Industry and commerce are constantly being criticized and modified at the behest of nonindustrial ideals. It might almost be said that the man who is

willing to discuss matters and to try to find out what is fair to all parties concerned is more wisely moral than is the man who stubbornly insists that his code must prevail unimpaired. Only by such open-minded consideration of issues can morality be kept from narrowness.

It is peculiarly important for the Christian to bear in mind this ever present necessity for considering new adjustments. Christian ideals are usually presented in the form of absolutely perfect precepts. Any sort of compromise is represented as a species of disloyalty. The Christian ideal is usually contrasted with other ideals in such fashion as to indicate the inferiority of all non-Christian practices. But such presentations are likely to overlook the fact that existing Christian standards are the outcome of historical development and are themselves the results of adjustment to definite historical situations. It cannot always be assumed that a traditional interpretation should have the right of way. One of the truest marks of Christian love is the ability to look at matters through the eyes of others. The Christian is to love his neighbor as himself. Such love would insist on permitting the neighbor's interests and preferences to have as much right as one's own preferences in determining a decision. The Christian ideal thus implies a constantly enlarging realm of moral considerations as the circle of "neighbors" increases.

**HISTORICAL ADJUSTMENTS OF CHRISTIAN IDEALS.**—It helps the modern Christian to understand the complicated problem which he faces, if he knows something of the history of Christianity. We can point to many in-

stances in the past when Christians were facing a conflict due to the pressure of different loyalties. The first Christians attempted to keep themselves unspotted from the world. But they had family ties, business connections, and political relationships. The early centuries of our era were called by Harnack the period of the "Hellenization" of Christianity. He regarded the compromises which were made as a degeneration of true Christianity; and he sought to recall Christian devotion to the primitive standards alleged to have existed before degeneration took place. This movement, however, was one in which there were gains as well as losses. The adoption of Hellenistic ideals meant the enrichment of Christian thinking in some directions as truly as it meant the loss of the peculiarly Jewish traits which marked the early stages of the movement. We may very properly speak of the process as the "Christianizing" of Hellenic culture rather than as the "Hellenizing" of Christianity. The process involved growth in appreciation of some ideas in Greek culture which were high and noble. The rights of non-Christian ways of thinking were eventually recognized, and a way was found by which "Christian" thinking could include what was good in the new as well as what was good in the old.

All through history a similar process has been going on. We can recognize the adjustments which have been made in the past and can rejoice in the breadth of vision which made it possible for Christianity to keep pace with growing culture. We need to carry over into

our present life the ideal of an enlarging ethics in order to attain a sane and constructive view of our modern complex problems.

**THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIAN IDEALS.**—It is difficult to designate any particular program of growth to which all persons must conform. But a Christian attempts to organize his life around the center of a whole-souled personal consecration to Jesus Christ. In such dedication he experiences a high moral idealism. The affections are set entirely on the things which please God. The supreme aim of a Christian will be to carry this attitude of absolute loyalty to the way of life revealed by Jesus into all realms of activity. But the moment he passes from a general attitude of devotion to a specific question of behavior in definite situations, he confronts many a problem of adjustment. If he is not prepared to face these in the spirit indicated above, he will be constantly embarrassed by the seeming inevitability of lapses from a "perfect" Christian loyalty. But if he understands that the very nature of moral living is the facing of conflicting interests and the education of moral judgment through the weighing of conflicting claims, he will view the experiences of adjustment as occasions for the progressive Christianizing of his life in all its varied relationships. There will, of course, be experimental adjustments; but, if these are known to be experiments, one can learn from failures as well as from successes how to make more satisfactory adjustments the next time. The triumph of Christian idealism is found in the persistent attempt to bring all loyal-

ties into harmony with the central loyalty to Jesus' way of living rather than the refusal to permit so-called secular interests to have a hearing.

CHRISTIAN VALUES AND CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES.—

Christian values are the things which Christians believe to be most worth seeking for the good of the individual and of society. The Christian must be discriminating in the things to which he gives his time, his life, and the weight of his influence. If the mind is set on worthy objectives, many little experiences and decisions of every day will be drawn along in the wake of the major objectives. The values which he has chosen will express themselves in his attitudes, so that almost instinctively he will feel the fineness and strength of some things and the coarseness or irrelevance of others. He will do all in his power to build character both in himself and in other persons. He will have a reverence for life and personality, so that he will not sacrifice personal values to lesser objectives. He will not seek influence over people so much as he will seek to bring himself and others under the influence of great ideals and great personalities. In this the Christian has a unique privilege in being able to bring others under the sway of Jesus.

The Christian will recognize that privilege comes not for gratification or prestige but for the sharing of high forms of good with others. Whatever his rank he will value service to others above any gains for himself. In a world in which grasping for power is widespread he will recognize that this is a trait of immaturity. Only those who are insecure as to their real values need

to dominate others. The Christian attitude is an attitude of joy in releasing in others their full potentialities through bringing them to the appreciation of the highest values. Compared with this the desire to dominate others is an inferior attitude. Jesus recognized this when he said: "He that is greatest among you shall be the servant of all."

When conspicuous power, conspicuous wealth, and conspicuous leisure are taken as the most desirable social values, humanity is held in a stage of social and spiritual immaturity. Freedom for growth, full development of powers within one's self, power not over others but for others, and the making of some valuable contribution to a rich and creative social fellowship—these are the attitudes that go with well-chosen values. Whatever the values of society at large may be, Christians can build little groups in which the influence of the higher values is paramount. Through these groups they can influence society at large.

Because there is need of Christian progress in every area of living, Christians are laying out a comprehensive program of advance in which the total outreach has been divided into seven areas suggested by the International Council of Religious Education as follows: (a) the Bible in life; (b) personal faith and experience; (c) Christian family life; (d) church life and outreach; (e) community issues; (f) major social problems; and (g) world-relations.

**THE CHRISTIANIZING OF PERSONAL HABITS.**—The most immediate responsibility of any person is the control of his own habits. Christian ethics addresses itself

to this task in its many warnings against the lure of self-indulgence and its many exhortations to attitudes of truthfulness, generosity, service, and the like. Consecration means the dedication of all one's faculties to the service of Christ. But everyone knows what a struggle it requires to bring into daily habits such attitudes as are compatible with Christian devotion. Our bodily and mental activities are stimulated primarily by the environment in which Christians and non-Christians alike live. Standards of behavior are shaped largely by the nature of this environment. Human beings must eat in order to live. Christian dedication does not supply the motive for eating. But the Christian will be disturbed if he finds that his habits of eating are incompatible with his finer ideals. Gluttony comes to be condemned. The Christianizing of the bodily appetites means eventually the attainment of such a control as will enable the Christian to eat without ceasing to be Christian in his attitudes. Other physical appetites have a natural source and prescribe their own ends. Any explanation of them must be made in terms of the physical processes which stimulate activity. The Christian endeavors to regulate the appetites so that their rightful satisfaction may be compatible with Christian ideals. Some sort of "compromise" between pure spirituality and pure physical indulgence is eventually reached, which permits the Christian to feel that his physical activities (which have their own independent rights) are contributing to a unified expression of his personality. Bodily health is a good thing in itself; but it is a better thing if it is also a means of making a

larger contribution to social experience and to the Kingdom of God.

**ETHICAL EXPRESSION OF PERSONALITY.**—The challenge of creative individuality is one of the most appealing things in Christian living. It is misleading to talk about Christian living as if it were the same for all persons. The fact is that it is different for every person and that each has the opportunity of expressing and developing his inmost self in his Christian living. The incalculable varieties of human potentiality and the rich diversity of personal gifts are to be expressed in Christian living. Each person is to be most himself as he comes to his best self in relation to other human beings and to God.

There are inevitable differences for Christian living arising from the fact that some minds are introvertive while others are extrovertive. The introvertive point of view applied to ethics leads to the working-out of comprehensive principles of ethical relationships and integrating these with feeling as well as with thought. It involves deep insight and feeling related to ethical values. The introvertive person develops ethically as he gets the focus of thought and of meditation to be less self-centered and less concentrated on personal or selfish issues and more concerned with the good of others and with the interests of society.

The ethical contribution of an extrovertive Christian person, on the other hand, will be in the field of action and of organization. He will help to put across in practical life the ethical advances that need to be made. He will not be without keen appreciation of the inner val-

ues, and yet his major form of ethical self-expression will be in action directed to the meeting of practical problems and the promotion of the common good. The actual working-out of the Christian life cannot follow any set pattern but must be vitally related to the sort of personality one has. At the same time as personality grows by expression one becomes more completely himself as a Christian by working with people and by tackling the issues of life in such a way as to promote the common good. Ethical growth for the extrovertive person means getting his normal activities organized for unselfish rather than for merely personal ends, as, for example, when a woman outgrows a disposition to spend herself in the organization of mere fussy social activities and uses organizing ability to promote higher social ends.

In the sum total of Christian attitudes the special thoughts and feelings of women, the values which they experience as sisters, daughters, wives, and mothers, and their attitudes toward society must be taken into the account. The special points of view of men of every station and every type of worthy achievement add further to the total of Christian interpretation. Included also are the fine attitudes of children and young people and the experience of being a child and a young person in society. Leaders have special experiences and special opportunities to express the contribution of their lives toward the magnificent sum total of the meaning of Christian living, and so also do followers and workers of all sorts. The Christian respect for personality along with the democratic organization of society gives scope

to all sorts and degrees of leadership and of co-operation with leaders. One leads in political, another in artistic, another in religious, and another in practical pursuits. It is good strategy in Christian education and planning to value and develop all these forms of leadership to the maximum degree and to give them scope in Christian accomplishment.

**ETHICAL IMPROVEMENT OF FAMILY RELATIONS.**—In the enlarging scope of Christian experience the family has a leading part. In the family the relationships are not only intimate but continuous, and they can be most helpful. Most of our standards of behavior in ethics are set up with reference to the individual, somewhat as if he could exist by himself. We need also to work out standards of excellence in family relations and in the achievement of a truly Christian and democratic type of family experience. There is need of working out more clearly the meaning in Christian terms of being a complete husband, wife, or parent. There is need also for Christian young people to think out the meaning of their ideals in the place where they have greatest scope for working them out, namely, in their personal relationships. Getting a good start at home will be an aid to them in the Christian expression of their lives outside, whereas if they overlook the Christian meaning of relations in the home there will be a hollow spot in their outside achievements. The building of the Christian world of which they dream begins at home. To create a little experiment in democracy, mutual helpfulness, creative interaction, and, in a word, Christian experience within the family is one of the most

significant projects in which any Christian can take part. Family experience makes a further contribution to ethical advance in that the delicate relationships of the home circle enable us more fully to respect the family life of all peoples, to appreciate their interests and longings, and to work with them to create a world in which family values will be as secure as possible. The family offers the highest analogies in Christian living when it gives us a means of understanding the majesty of God's fatherhood and the dignity of human brotherhood.

**CHRISTIAN ADVANCE THROUGH VOCATION.**—Every worthy occupation and profession has a contribution to make to Christian advance. The good ends which Christianity seeks for humanity require an almost infinite number and variety of skills. Every good occupation has its place in meeting the needs of humanity and should meet the needs for which it has a responsibility as well as they can be met. This requires a high standard of effectiveness for every Christian in the calling to which he devotes himself. The Christian also should have a keen sense of the social and personal meaning of his work. It is right that the physician, for example, should feel both stimulus and reward in the fact that people have greater confidence as to health and life for themselves and for their loved ones because his professional services are available. Likewise all honest persons have greater confidence as to the protection of their rights and the safeguarding of their welfare because of the profession of the law. The builder who erects houses for families to live in, the saleswoman who

helps a customer find what she needs at a price she can afford to pay, the farmer who produces food for men, women, and children and for the dumb beasts which depend upon man—all these should find great Christian meaning in their daily work. From these specialized forms of tremendously important service both the individual and the community have a better chance of knowing what needs to be done, of understanding how to do it and how to evaluate each project in a set of values which make up the processes of civilized living. Let us think, for example, of two young physicians, doctors William James Mayo and Charles Mayo, who created the world-famous Mayo Clinic and built a monument of magnificent proportions in the hearts of men through giving medical service of outstanding quality and in a spirit of Christian devotion at moderate fees. These physicians in addition to their service in the relief of human suffering used their profits in giving nearly three million dollars to the University of Minnesota for medical research, thus perpetuating through time and into all the world the benefits of Christian service in the profession of medicine. Furthermore, the Mayo Clinic still stands—though they are gone—to carry on in the spirit of its founders. In every profession and calling there are opportunities, often unnoticed, for service of the highest Christian quality.

THE ETHICAL CHALLENGE OF SCIENCE.—Scientific men by patient labor and intense interest in the laws and processes of nature have made discoveries and worked out processes of the greatest value to humanity.

Their successes give the impression that there is nothing too difficult for man to tackle and that every practical problem that faces mankind ought ultimately to be solved. In the realm of science all theories, methods, and contrivances are constantly being subjected to revaluation. No less, there should be in ethics an open-minded and courageous approach to the much more baffling problems that pertain to human society and its greatest well-being. Science produces tools of fabulous precision and power, many of which society uses almost with the irresponsibility of the ape as far as their loyal dedication to human welfare is concerned. The experience of scientific men should lead us to seek greater precision in the understanding of all the factors involved in human problems and more far-seeing adaptations of all means within our power to the high ends of Christian social living. Incidentally, this would involve a new interest in the conservation and development of all resources, both natural and human, for the social good.

**SUGGESTIVENESS OF ART AND AESTHETICS.**—In addition to all else that Christianity is, it is a venture in the art of living at the best. It aims to bring symmetry and proportion and all pleasing qualities into our living. Christianity, which has been a stimulus to the specific work of artists and musicians, can also make more of the motive of the graceful, the symmetrical, the pleasing, and the harmonious in human interaction. The field of art also indicates that superbly fine results can be achieved out of common materials. The arts and aesthetics have a contribution to make to the fuller

understanding of Christian ethics and Christian living.

**ETHICS OF MEANS AND ENDS.**—While Christians usually have a general idea of the ends for which they are living, there is much need of clear analysis of Christian responsibility for choices and objectives. If we live largely by impulse or by tradition, we may be working unconsciously toward undesirable ends and failing to move toward the ends which we really seek. There has been much misleading discussion of the relation of means and ends as if these could in some way be separated from each other. The Christian must not only choose right ends for himself and for society but must be constantly alert as to whether the means which he uses are well calculated to achieve what he desires. Means and measures are justified by the ends which may reasonably be expected to ensue from them but not by mere alleged intentions. It is blind to suppose that worthy ends can be advanced by unworthy means because there is an integrity of relationship between cause and effect. If one uses unsound material or poor plans either for a building or for a life, no amount of vague good intention will nullify the effects of his use of inadequate means. Anyone has a right to assume that the ends which we seek are really in accordance with the means which we use. We reap what we sow. Good personal goals, good social objectives, good economic goals that will provide the means of life and the tools of culture, good political objectives in the organization of society, the maintaining of order, the protection of freedom, and the safeguarding of normal privi-

leges of men—such ends must be sought by the Christian and advanced through the most effective means which he has within his power. To dream fine dreams and not to use measures to make them come true is a form of futility. To act irresponsibly and yet to profess the best of intentions is a form of insincerity. The Christian is dedicated to a higher type of life than this. He has found the supreme meaning of life in his belief that God loves men and invites them to share that love. This faith finds its concrete expression in Jesus, who reveals the full meaning of a life completely shared with God. The Christian is eager to discover ways in which this shared life may be realized in the modern world. He begins with his own affections and aspirations. He brings his physical impulses into co-ordination with his Christian ideals. He reaches out to adjust his social relations to the demands of the ideal of the Kingdom. He finds his greatest triumph in the discovery of ways in which he can share the highest good of life with all men. To create and maintain a fellowship of all men in the spirit of good will is the goal toward which the Christian strives.

**ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.**—The life of the community itself is a part of the ethical education of the individual. The individual takes for granted the ways and standards to which he becomes accustomed. Community standards and the extent to which the sense of the common well-being is highly developed affect the ethical life of each person. It is hard to have either democracy or Christianity except in anemic form unless there is a pervasive concern

for the common good. Internationally, the sense of community is feebly developed, with resulting absence or distortion of normal ethical relations such as Christianity would involve for a world-society. Christianity appreciates the good already achieved and also reaches forth toward the good that is to be. In the continuing Christianization of life there must be a high degree of competence to work with existing patterns or to create new ones as the case may require. An ethical framework for society requires facility for change within a structure of freedom and co-operation.

**THE CHRISTIANIZING OF THE SOCIAL ORDER.**—The institutions of industry and politics have grown up in response to natural aspirations and needs. They have developed their own laws. It is to be expected and desired that the fundamental rules in industry and politics should be developed by actual experience instead of being imposed from without. It is here that there is a very prevalent misunderstanding on the part of doctrinaire Christians. It is not infrequently assumed that the Christian church is capable of telling business-men how business should be run "on Christian principles." The truth of the matter is that business must be run on business principles, or it will soon run into disaster. Equally, if it is run on so-called business principles, that lack humane and democratic consideration, it will likewise run into disaster. A combination of business experience with Christian idealism on the part of businessmen promises real advancement.

The Christianizing of the social order is no simple matter. It will be gradually brought about as Christian

men discover ways in which business and other enterprises may be successfully conducted in such fashion that a man may maintain in these an attitude compatible with that which he professes as a Christian. Protests arising out of the discovery of inhuman consequences of existing industrial customs will stimulate conscientious men to re-examine their habits and to consider means of relieving the situation. Large-minded Christian leaders in the industrial world will initiate experiments looking to a better regime. Christian people will insist that some way be found in which participation in industrial or commercial enterprises may be compatible with the spirit of good will toward all men. The problems of politics will be met in the same way. War as the supreme resort of men in cases of conflict of opinion is already generally condemned by Christians. There is arising a vehement insistence that other ways of determining issues shall be adopted, so that Christian citizens shall not be compelled, as many now are compelled, to ask whether one can be a loyal patriot and a loyal Christian at the same time. Christian ethics being based on God's fatherhood and man's brotherhood assumes joint dedication to the common good and creative co-operation among the members of God's family. Christianity is also an ethics of work and of people who work together. It calls for mutual help and common objectives. Both the family idea and the idea of workmanship enter into the pattern of Christian living. Christian ethics cannot be fully expressed by any figure taken from one type of experience, whether political, domestic, or occupation-

al. In all these areas we seek the good life. Whether the original kingdom idea in Christianity was ethical or eschatological or both, the Christian spirit today is stimulating men and women to work out the ethical and social issues of brotherly living in society. We have the choice between the creation of a more Christian social order and the endurance of all the disadvantages and disasters of a pagan one. A Christian order is naturally a forward-looking one as is the life of an individual Christian.

A Christian order forgets some things which are behind and looks forward to things which are before and then presses toward the mark of the high calling of Christianizing social relations. It has its conflicts as does the individual life, but it must learn to think socially in Christian terms, interfusing the new economic and political world with a Christian spirit. Yet it must proceed on a solid basis of experience. Groups and nations can proceed too drastically in areas where there is no guidance of experience. When they do this, their new social forms may break down because of some unforeseen flaw. Moreover, new forms may be used as tools of old forces, for the form without the spirit is subject to misuse and exploiters are always in the offing.

**EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS.**—One of the first impulses of the Christian who has experienced the joy of a genuine Christian consecration is to persuade others to enter into the same experience. This, again, is a specific expression of a natural impulse which urges us to share with others. The Christian is urged to "win souls

for Christ" as the primary expression of his consecration. In evangelism there is the Christianizing of a natural social impulse. But evangelism brings its problems. The personal honesty of those whom one seeks to "convert" must be respected. The Christian life must be so presented as to be actually practicable; otherwise there will be disillusionment and "backslding." Evangelism is thus led perforce to consider the various realms in which the convert must live and to suggest ways of living which will secure the continuance of Christian idealism.

Missionary activity is the extension of evangelism to peoples whose traditions are non-Christian. Here again the Christian is engaged in an activity which may be found elsewhere. Other religions have their missionaries. The Christian is endeavoring to establish some kind of contact which shall be dominated by Christian motives. But the missionary is compelled to face serious problems of interpretation. The story of the Hellenizing of Christianity in the early centuries finds its counterpart today as the Christian missionary tries to speak and to live in a new culture. Converts from non-Christian peoples are increasingly demanding the right to think out Christianity in terms of their own culture. As the historian now recognizes "Jewish Christianity," "Greek Christianity," "Latin Christianity," or "Anglican Christianity," so we are beginning to recognize "Chinese Christianity," "Japanese Christianity," "Indian Christianity," and other types as a result of modern missionary work.

THE ETHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF A WORLD-WIDE CHURCH.—The ethical significance of the Christian church as a world-wide body, including all nations and races and recognizing the common fatherhood of God and the unity of mankind in God should stand out clearly in the presence of the spiritual needs and social confusions of the world today. Great new ethical values are arising in connection with the implications of the World Council of Churches and with the spirit of ecumenicity. Although this latter is a somewhat unfamiliar word, it is no more difficult than other words which we use constantly, and it stands for a growing edge in the ethical relationships of mankind as represented by the churches. The heart of the meaning of this term includes both universality and closeness of relationships. It implies that a Christian may go all over the world and find brothers and sisters everywhere. There is one fellowship of Christ, one family of God, which provides a principle of unity for mankind and a philosophy of world-society. Science, trade, political organization, educational exchange, and cultural relationships can be carried on within such a philosophy of society with vast and dependable good for mankind. Without the brotherly heart the tools of science may be used for mass murder, trade may become the occasion for colossal animosities and deadly rivalries, political organization may be used to create terror and hatred, so that cultural exchange, which is the real business of world-society, is stifled.

THE ADVENTURE OF CHRISTIAN FAITH.—To live a Christian life calls for the best that is in us. It means

allegiance to the highest discoveries that come from the long experience of the past and calls for constant analysis of social and ethical situations that we may discover the highest good in the new circumstances. Christian living is in one sense a simple matter of loyalty to Jesus Christ and to one's own duty. In many ways, however, it is a most difficult thing involving elevation of standards and individual struggle.

The Christian life is a matter of being and doing. One cannot do much good without being good, nor can one be good without expressing this goodness in action. The vigor of Christian living grows with practice and expands as we give scope to the finer things. The Christian lives not merely by the motivation of duty but by the enthusiasm of love, which is the most dynamic and the most creative of attitudes. While he must always weigh the consequences of his actions in ethical terms, the motivation for his activity comes from his devotion to God and to the image of God in man. The good which we desire can never conquer the gigantic and ruthless forces of evil with which we have to contend unless we have an "all-out" enthusiasm which comes from religious devotion. Behind all beneficent developments there are devoted and hard-working lives. We have had alluring blueprints of better social living, but they have faded out or have been blotted out in blood. One reason why they have not come to reality is that there has not been enough simple devotion to them to overcome the handicaps of thoughtlessness and selfishness with which all social improvement must contend.

Jesus showed a marvelous combination of a simple appreciation of the common things with a passionate devotion to God and the people, and he went straight to the mark of bringing the Kingdom of God into the midst of human living, whatever the opposition or the personal risk. His poise and inner peace were those of a mind in harmony with God, while his revolutionary earnestness came to grips with all that did not harmonize with the reign of God and the better possibilities of human life. The Christian life for the individual and for the race is one of growing conquest. The Christian seeks the larger and finer possibilities in human living and thinking. This he does in the faith that time and the universe are on his side.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why is the sense of obligation stronger in personal relationships than in wider relationships where there is no personal contact?
2. Why do rules of moral behavior have to be changed from time to time? What are the new areas of modern experience in which ethical principles have not been thoroughly worked out?
3. What reasons are there for thinking that we should have a perfect system of Christian ethics? What are the pros and cons regarding a perfect life for the individual?
4. What are the reasons for or against compromise in the presence of different points of view on ethical questions?
5. Explain in what sense present moral standards are the result of historical development.
6. What were the gains or losses to Christianity in the Hellenization of Christian culture? Why did Harnack think that Christianity became less pure during the period of Hellenization?

7. In what sense is Jesus the center around whom the Christian organizes his ethical life?
8. What are Christian values, and why does the Christian person need a clear sense of such values?
9. How does the desire to dominate others indicate a relatively immature personality?
10. What is the importance for Christian living of criticizing one's personal habits?
11. Why does individuality have to be taken into account in Christian living? How do types of personality effect the type of Christian life which one would naturally live?
12. Why is one's vocation an important part of his Christian life? How can one advance Christianity more effectively because of his vocation?
13. How is ethics challenged by scientific advancement? By aesthetics?
14. Why is it important to consider both ends and means in our program of Christian living?
15. Why is the Christianization of the social order difficult? How does the social order affect the individual, and how can he influence the social order?
16. Describe the way in which ethical attitudes enter into the fields of evangelism and missions.
17. What is the ethical significance of the church for the individual and for world-relationships?
18. Why is Christian faith called an adventure? How does the spirit of devotion effect this adventure? How is it affected by analysis and research?

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